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Message from the Director, SCERT, Assam

In the realm of education, research-based interventions have now attained the status of an essential tool, deemed indispensable for ensuring the quality of education. Conventional and stereotypical educational endeavours have proven to yield meagre outcomes in terms of advancing the educational landscape of a nation. Hence, it becomes imperative that our state embraces innovative, research-driven actions to propel itself forward in alignment with the contemporary advancements within the educational domain.

Since its inception, SCERT, Assam, has consistently underscored the importance of research and activities rooted in research, particularly pertaining to school and teacher education. It is with great pride that the Department of Research and Evaluation at SCERT, Assam, presents the Seventh volume (No.I) of its Educational Research Journal. This compilation showcases research contributions from scholars engaged in diverse educational spheres.

It is my anticipation that this enlightening journal will effectively facilitate the dissemination of research findings amongst educational practitioners. Moreover, I believe it will serve as a valuable resource for teachers, teacher educators, educational planners, and administrators, aiding them in comprehending the current status of school and teacher education. Furthermore, it will empower them to formulate pertinent, outcome-oriented strategies for the advancement of these domains.

I extend my heartfelt gratitude to all the diligent contributors of research papers, the esteemed members of the editorial board, the discerning reviewers, the assiduous editors, and the unwavering support group. Their painstaking efforts have culminated in the publication of this volume.

Dr. Nirada Devi
Director, SCERT, Assam, Ghy-19
Chief Editor

Editorial

The imperative integration of research-derived discoveries for the enhancement of quality control within educational endeavours is now an undeniable necessity for every educational institution. Through research-oriented planning, various indicators of quality education can be rigorously assessed, thereby formulating strategies for the judicious and optimal utilization of available educational resources. While research seminars and conferences have garnered favour among academicians in our state recently, the publication of research papers in the form of a journal remains considerably limited. Consequently, the constrained dissemination of findings from these research inquiries curtails their potential utility.

In an effort to address this shortfall, the Department of Research and Evaluation at SCERT, Assam, is pleased to present the Seventh volume (No. I) of its educational research journal, complete with an ISSN. This endeavour not only aims to disseminate the findings of these studies among educational stakeholders but also to instil motivation among educational practitioners to delve into research endeavours tackling diverse educational challenges within the state. Recognizing the scarcity of such opportunities in Assam, a concerted effort has been made to include a substantial number of research papers, fostering the proliferation of research-driven actions for elevating educational quality.

The editorial board has undertaken minor revisions, ensuring coherence in language and clarity of the content, while retaining the essence of the original submissions. Although individual researchers have undertaken studies, a systematic approach has often been underutilized, potentially due to a lack of orientation or awareness about methodological rigor in research. Consequently, those engaged in educational research should be equipped with proficient research techniques, allowing their comprehensive studies to effectively inform the formulation of education policies. While a significant portion of studies conducted are either action research or applied research, there is an evident need for fundamental and foundational studies across various dimensions of education to uphold quality standards. Thus, appropriate authorities are encouraged to provide comprehensive exposure to individuals driven by research motivation, offering grant schemes that facilitate meaningful research endeavours.

A notable observation pertains to the fact that implementing departments are often less inclined toward research objectives. Consequently, even if high-quality research is conducted, the outcomes tend to languish within university libraries or other repositories, with limited accessibility for those who could enact these findings in practical educational contexts. It is essential to infuse a conducive research environment within the State, nurturing an appetite for innovative methodologies and techniques that yield superior outcomes. This involves continuous orientation of researchers and updates regarding evolving research paradigms from academic organizations.

In this edition, an earnest endeavour has been made to present a peer-reviewed journal, benefiting from the expertise of distinguished educational specialists, particularly in the realm of research. I extend my heartfelt appreciation to Dr. Mona Sedwal, NIEPA, Delhi; Dr. M.V. Srinivasan, NCERT, Delhi; Dr. Tulika Dey, NERIE, Shillong; Dr. Yeasmin Sultana, Tezpur University; Prof. Nil Ratan Roy, Tezpur University and Dr. Navarupa Bhuyan, PDUAM, Behali for their commendable contributions, instrumental in refining the papers for publication.

Furthermore, I seize this moment to express my gratitude to the dedicated researchers who have contributed their papers to this journal, the members of the editorial board for their rigorous efforts, and the supportive group for their unwavering commitment in realizing this comprehensive volume of the educational research journal.

Dr. Jayanta Kr. Sarmah,
Editor

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A Comparative Study on the Curriculum of Two-Year B.Ed. Program of Tezpur University and Gauhati University

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Abstract

The National Curriculum Framework for Teacher Education is a crucial document that outlines the guidelines and recommendations for the development of teacher education programmes in India. This study compares two-year B.Ed. program of Gauhati University and Tezpur University in Assam, India. This study aims to analyze the curriculum, structure, and contents of the B.Ed. program of the two universities to understand the similarities and differences in their approach as one is a state university, while the other is a central university. Further suggestions for improvement in the teacher education programs are also provided. The study uses a qualitative approach and content analysis method to analyze the course structure and curriculum of the B.Ed. programs of the two universities i.e., Gauhati University and Tezpur University in Assam. This paper is an attempt to draw the differences and similarities between a state university and central university in Assam which can be useful for the changing educational needs of the stakeholders along with meeting the standards set by the educational policies.

Keywords- Curriculum, B.Ed. Program, Tezpur University, Gauhati University

Introduction

Curriculum is a central component of education, as it defines the content, methods, and objectives that guide the learning process (Wolven, 2013)(Govender & Naicker, 2014). It encompasses the planned experiences, activities, and materials designed to facilitate student learning and achievement. (Hasanuddin et al., 2023). Curriculum development, then, is the systematic process of organizing and preparing the curriculum for implementation in the classroom (Wolven, 2013).

Curriculum development is a complex and multifaceted endeavour that involves various stakeholders, including educators, administrators, policymakers, and community members. It is a continuous process that requires careful planning, implementation, and evaluation to ensure that the curriculum remains relevant, effective, and aligned with educational goals and standards. (Dopson & Tas, 2004a)

The definition of curriculum emphasizes the importance of providing students with a set of organized classroom experiences, which hopefully will impact and change them in a constructive way. (Dopson & Tas, 2004a) Planning is essential when developing curriculum for a program, and it should be based on an overall curriculum planning strategy that cultivates an environment for program development, implementation, and evaluation. (Dopson & Tas, 2004a)

Curriculum development is usually associated with a specific, tangible subject to be taught, such as a textbook, syllabus, teacher's guide, or learning package. It is the heart of education that involves a specific, tangible subject to be taught. (Wolven, 2013)

Recommendation of NCFTE for Teacher Education Programme

The National Curriculum Framework for Teacher Education is a crucial document that outlines the guidelines and recommendations for the development of teacher education programmes in India. The framework emphasizes the need for a shift from a traditional behaviouristic approach to a more constructivist approach in teacher professional development. (Rout & Kumar Behera, 2014) This shift calls for the acquisition of new skills, knowledge, attitudes, and values among teachers, as well as the employment of a wide variety of teaching strategies to enable students to construct their own knowledge.

The system of teacher education has grown significantly in recent decades, but it has been criticized for being static and unresponsive to the changes in the school and social system. The concern is that teacher education is not effectively producing efficient teachers, as reflected in the National Policy of Education and Programme of Action, which calls for a complete overhaul of the system. (Jena & Biswal, 2015) This underscores the importance of investing in the preparation of teachers to ensure the future of the nation. (Ifunanya et al., 2013)

The National Teacher Education Audit conducted in 1995 revealed that a third of the teaching force was engaged in qualification-driven in-service education, but

these qualifications had little impact on classroom practice. This finding highlights the need for teacher professional development to focus on strengthening teachers' subject knowledge, pedagogical content knowledge, and teaching skills, as emphasized in the National Policy Framework for Teacher Education and Development in South Africa.

Literature Review

The Evaluation of Curriculum in India and Globally

Assessing curriculum is an important aspect of enhancing education. It informs developers about whether the studied material is beneficial, pertinent, and efficient. In the whole world, numerous models and methods have been employed to assess curriculum, varying with respect to goals, context, and level.

Global Approaches to Curriculum Evaluation

One of the oldest and most popular models is Tyler's model, which is concerned with verifying if the learning objectives are aligned with the activities and the outcomes. It primarily examines outcomes and but does not give importance on flexibility or modification.

A more comprehensive approach is the CIPP model, which focuses on Context, Input, Process, and Product. Both planning curriculum and refining curriculum are assisted by this, as it examines needs, resources, the way the teaching is executed, and what the outcomes are (Mehmeti et al., 2024). The reason this model is most helpful within teacher education programs is that it provides a clear picture at each step.

Another approach, referred to as Backward Design, begins with establishing the learning objectives prior to designing lessons and assessments aligned with those objectives (Basu, 2017.). Likewise, Constructive Alignment aligns the learning outcomes, instructional techniques, and assessment (Neuman, 2014). These are practiced in higher education as well as professional development.

In most nations, standardized tests such as PISA and TIMSS are utilized to gauge student learning and measure the effectiveness of school curricula in preparing students for global skills (Zhang et al., 2023). These assessments have a bearing on policy at the national level as well as curriculum reform.

Curriculum Evaluation in India

In India, national frameworks such as the National Curriculum Framework for Teacher Education (NCFTE, 2009) and the National Education Policy (NEP, 2020) influence curriculum assessment. NCFTE urged the teacher education sector to place greater emphasis on authentic classroom practices, critical thinking, and inclusive

pedagogy. NEP 2020 furthered this by launching the Integrated Teacher Education Programme (ITEP) and advocating for 21st-century skills such as digital literacy, multilingualism, and experiential learning.

To assist with curriculum assessment, India has instruments such as PINDICS, Shaala Siddhi, and ADEPTS that track the quality of education using teachers' performance and school effectiveness. These instruments are inputs (such as infrastructure), processes (such as pedagogy), and outcomes (such as learner learning).

A few have examined how these policies function in the field. Das (2023) concluded that the new B.Ed. curriculum improved hands-on training but not digital learning or electives. Bhivsanee (2024) also stated that while fieldwork in ITEP is better now, there should be a more effective way of determining if teacher trainees are ready to teach.

Subaveerapandiyan and Nandhakumar (2022), during the pandemic, identified that a large number of teacher educators did not receive appropriate ICT training, and hence online teaching became challenging. They recommended that digital skills and technologies must become a routine of curriculum assessment in teacher education.

Recent and Global Trends in Curriculum Evaluation

Current trends indicate that curriculum assessment is more student-centered and flexible. El-Hamamsy et al. (2023) proposed a cascade model, where the development of changes in the curriculum is made gradually with teacher and school feedback. This eases the process of implementation and makes it more efficient. Rojas Bruna (2025) employed academic portfolios in the training of teachers. These portfolios facilitated student-teachers to reflect on what they had learned and to relate theory more strongly to practice. Reflection is today considered a significant aspect of curriculum assessment. Nyaaba (2025) created an AI-preserved curriculum tool in Ghana that integrates local requirements with international norms. Such a model may serve India as well to balance tradition and modernity in its curriculum framework. Across the world, authors such as Zhang et al. (2023) have identified that assessment systems are increasingly emphasizing sustainability, professional values, and global citizenship. Such priorities are also beginning to shape curriculum aims and how they are measured.

Objectives of the study

1. To study the components of Teacher Education programmes with respect to NCFTE 2009 and NCTE 2014 regulations

2. To analyze the B.Ed. curriculum of Tezpur University
3. To analyze the B.Ed. curriculum of Gauhati University
4. To compare the B.Ed. curriculum of Tezpur University and Gauhati University on the basis of the components of Teacher Education Programme concerning NCFTE 2009 and NCTE 2014 regulations.

Methodology

In order to satisfy the needs of the objectives of the present study qualitative research approach is used. The qualitative approach is effective in determining the deeper meaning of the experiences of human beings and in giving a rich description of the specific phenomena being investigated in reality. The advantage of taking a qualitative research design is that it also makes it different from the quantitative research approach in that it offers a complete description and analysis of a research subject, without limiting the scope of the research and the nature of participants' responses (Collis & Hussey, 2014). Cresswell (2014) views qualitative researchers as gradually making sense of a social phenomenon by exploring and examining informants' perceptions, experiences and meanings about the phenomenon, hence descriptive data in the present study. (Neuman, 2014) asserts that qualitative inquiry is fundamentally people-oriented. The author posits that such orientation enables researchers to closely examine situations, thus engaging research participants in their statements and thoughts on the phenomenon being studied.

Hence, the method used for the present study to satisfy the objectives is qualitative research and secondary data have been collected from one central university and a state university of Assam. Based on the guidelines laid down by NCFTE 2009, NCTE 2014 regulations for two-year B.Ed. program and NEP 2020 for Curriculum evaluation, a few parameters have been selected in order to evaluate the curriculum of the two selected universities.

Findings and Analysis

After a thorough analysis of the policy documents like NCFTE 2009, NCTE 2014 regulations for two-year B.Ed. program, and NEP 2020, a set of benchmarks have been found out which are in accordance with the above-mentioned policies. Some of the benchmarks may be stated as follows-

1. Curriculum Relevance

The curriculum for the B.Ed. program is to be designed in a manner which promotes the relevancy of the present scenario of the state and the nation. Some of the indicators include Inclusive education integration, multilingualism, use of ICT etc. (NCTE., 2009)

While analyzing the curriculum of both the universities, namely Tezpur University and Gauhati University is up-to-date and meets the national standards.

2. Subject Knowledge and Pedagogical Knowledge

The curriculum should be designed in a manner that enhances the subject knowledge along with pedagogical expertise to the stakeholders. The indicators include subject clarity, strategies that can be carried out in schools to develop pedagogical knowledge. (NCTE., 2009)

Curriculum analysis reveals that the selected universities are equipped in providing subject knowledge and pedagogical knowledge through a well-planned curriculum and its implementation.

3. Intergration of theory and practice

The curriculum prescribed for the B. Ed. Curriculum requires sufficient integration of theory and practise which can be achieved through internships in schools, community engagement, preparation of reflective diaries, delivery of lesson plans in practice teaching etc. (NCTE., 2009)

Tezpur University and Gauhati university showcases the integration of theory and practice through the above-mentioned activities, yet in case of Gauhati University the scope for community engagement is not mentioned in the curriculum.

4. Assessment and evaluation

Assessment and evaluation form a crucial part of teaching learning process. The assessments can be carried out in a comprehensive manner through formative and summative assessment. The indicators include sessional tests, semester/ annual examinations in the form of written tests, assignments, observations during practise teaching in schools etc. (NCTE., 2009)

Analysis says that both the universities follow a structured format form assessment and evaluation where in case of Tezpur University a semester system of evaluation is followed which is supported by relative grading system. On the other hand, Gauhati university follows annual system of evaluation along with absolute grading system.

5. Engagement with field/ practicum

B. Ed. curriculum should be designed in a manner that encourages the teacher-trainees to prepare themselves for engagement in schools. This can be achieved through school internships, practicum that promotes communication with community and school managing committees. The teacher-trainees should be encouraged to form study circles, participate in school functions and events, and offer volunteer services if and when required throughout the internship period.

Analyses show both the universities abide by the regulations set by NCTE 2014, NCFTE 2009 yet room for improvement prevails as at times teacher- trainees may not get the ample time for engagement as preparation and delivery of lesson plans occupy a major part of the school internship leaving less scope for other activities.

Some other parameters of comparison between Tezpur University and Gauhati university are also mentioned in a tabulated manner given below-

Table 1
Showing comparative analysis of the curriculum of Tezpur University and Gauhati University

Parameters	Tezpur University	Gauhati University
Type of Institution	Central University	State University
Marking system	Relative grading/marking	Absolute grading/marking
Evaluation pattern	Semester wise	Annual system
total papers/courses	20 papers	14 papers
school internship	20 weeks	20 weeks
course objectives	clearly mentioned	clearly mentioned
credits per paper	clearly mentioned	not clearly mentioned
marks per paper	not clearly mentioned	clearly mentioned
reference books	clearly mentioned	clearly mentioned
Scope for improvement of marks	not clearly mentioned	clearly mentioned
structure of questions in examination	vary from paper to paper	follows a pre-determined structured system
student intake	maximum 65 students in the department of Tezpur University (only campus)	maximum 100 students each in all the available 39 affiliated colleges and Gauhati university campus
pedagogy subjects available	Seven	Eleven
optional subjects	Two	Five
open elective	Two	None
scope for community engagement	Yes	None

After making a comparison of curriculum between Tezpur University and Gauhati University the following results were obtained-

Tezpur University is a central university offering 2-year B.Ed. program from 2016 onwards while Gauhati University is a state university which is offering 2-year B.Ed. program since 2014. Previously Gauhati University offered 1 year B.Ed. program.

Tezpur University follows a relative grading/marking system with grade points which can be converted to percentage by a prescribed formula. Whereas absolute grading/marking system is followed by Gauhati University.

Evaluation pattern is semester-wise in Tezpur University whereas the annual system of evaluation is followed by Gauhati University.

Tezpur University prescribes a total of 20 papers which includes 15 core papers and 1 optional paper and 2 open electives along with 2 pedagogy papers. Whereas in Gauhati University there is a requirement for 14 papers where 13 papers are core papers, 2 pedagogy papers and 1 paper is optional. There is no option for Open University elective.

The period of school internship is of 20 weeks for Tezpur University where 4 weeks are assigned as pre-internship and rest of the 16 weeks are purely for school internship which is conducted in the third semester of the B.Ed. program. Whereas for Gauhati University, 16 weeks are assigned for school internship in the second year of the course, although 4 weeks are assigned in the first year of the B.Ed. program as Practise teaching where observation of the classes are done by the pupil- teachers along with the preparation of 15 lesson plans one of the lesson deliveries to be taken into account for evaluation.

The program/course objectives are clearly mentioned and as per NCTE guidelines for both Tezpur University and Gauhati University which focuses on the development of all the domains of learning such as Cognitive domain, Affective domain as well as psychomotor domain.

The credits per paper have been clearly mentioned in Tezpur University curriculum whereas for Gauhati University credits per paper has not been clearly mentioned.

The marks per paper have not been clearly mentioned in Tezpur University curriculum whereas for Gauhati University, marks per paper have been clearly mentioned.

The scope for improvement of marks/grades has not been mentioned in the Tezpur University curriculum whereas for Gauhati University scope for improvement of marks/grades in assignments/projects is possible.

The reference books per course have been clearly mentioned in both Tezpur University as well as Gauhati University.

The structure of questions in examinations is flexible and varies from paper to paper and depends upon the course instructor in Tezpur University. Whereas for Gauhati University, it follows a pre-determined structured system.

The student intake is maximum 65 which is centred to the main campus of Tezpur University, whereas for Gauhati University a maximum of 100 students are admitted each in all the available 39 affiliated colleges and Gauhati university campus.

The available pedagogy subjects available in Tezpur University are seven which are- English, Assamese, Hindi, Social sciences, Physical sciences, biological sciences and Mathematical sciences, out of which a student is supposed to select two pedagogies throughout the entire course. Whereas for Gauhati University a maximum of eleven pedagogies are available namely- Assamese/Hindi/Bodo/Bengali, History, Geography, Science, Mathematics, Social Science, English, Sanskrit out of which two pedagogies to be selected by the student.

The available optional subjects available in Tezpur University are Environmental Education and Peace education out of which one subject is to be selected by the student in Tezpur University. Moreover, two open university electives are to be selected. In case of Gauhati University, five optional subjects are available - Environmental Education, Guidance & Counseling, Health & Physical Education, Teacher Education, Peace and human Rights education out of which a student is supposed to select one optional subject. There is no scope for open university elective in Gauhati University.

There is scope for community engagement for students of Tezpur University during the B.Ed. program, whereas, there is no scope for community engagement in Gauhati University B.Ed. curriculum.

Recommendations/Suggestions

The following recommendations/suggestions can be put forward for the improvement of B.Ed. curriculum in the selected universities of Assam

In case of Tezpur University

- It should provide clear distribution of marks and passing marks/ grades for evaluation. Relative grading system can sometimes create confusion among the students as well as the teaching staff.
- It should provide scope for improvement of marks/grades through assignments, re-examination options etc. Students may feel the need to appear for re-examination in order to increase their grades/ percentage.
- Problem -solving and skill development opportunities should be provided to students to equip them to the changing needs of the 21st century.
- Students should be encouraged to develop a positive attitude towards the teaching-learning process. This in turn can encourage the students to carry a positive attitude throughout the course and prevent academic pressure.
- Papers like 'Gender studies' should be taught in the class before the internship program as the pre-service teachers will then be able to relate to the practical aspects of it in the real classroom setting, which will in turn facilitate the pre-service teachers to handle issues like gender disparity, etc.
- In the paper 'Inclusive Education', the focus should not only be given on theoretical aspects but also on practical aspects like Inclusive classroom practices so that they can fulfil the diverse needs of the students.
- To prepare the students for the professional field, workshops/ coaching classes can be conducted in the university and exposure should be provided regarding higher studies, qualifying examination like CTET, UGC NET, STET etc.
- Alumni associations should be formed in order to stay connected with the people already in the professional field. It can encourage placement activities, professional ethics and work culture, development of professional skills through meetings, feedbacks etc.

In case of Gauhati University

- Scope for community engagement and interaction with common masses should be encouraged as it can be a means to connect with the school drop-outs, out-of-school children and students who are deprived of education.

- Flexibility in the question pattern and evaluation should be encouraged to provide the scope for variety which can cater to the various learning styles and abilities of the learners.
- Problem-solving opportunities should be provided in the form of case studies, reflective diary writing, reflective teaching practices and classroom management strategies.
- Teaching skills and micro-teaching sessions should be given sufficient importance and ample amount of time should be invested in developing the skills through micro-teaching sessions before going for actual teaching in schools.
- Adequate practice should be provided for developing a student-centric teaching learning process.
- Papers like ‘Gender studies’ should be taught in the class before the internship program as the pre-service teachers will then be able to relate to the practical aspects of it in the real classroom setting, which will in turn facilitate the pre-service teachers to handle issues like gender disparity, etc.
- In paper ‘Inclusive Education’, the focus should not only be given on theoretical aspects but also on practical aspects like inclusive classroom practices so that teacher educators can fulfil the diverse needs of the students.
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- Alumni associations should be formed in order to stay connected with the people already in the professional field. It can encourage placement activities, professional ethics and work culture, development of professional skills through meetings, feedbacks etc.

Conclusion

It may be concluded that the NCFTE, 2009, NCFTE 2014, NEP 2020 is enormously important in the present scenario of the teacher education in India. And from the comparative study it has been seen that there are still so many things deficient in both the state and central universities though they are following the recommendation but still many components require clarity in practical ground. With the rise of

technology, teaching learning should be practiced in such a way which meets the needs of the learners and thus the B.Ed. curriculum should also reflect the same.

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A Study of National Cadet Core Course of College Students in Context of NEP 2020

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Abstract

This study is a policy review of felt need to expose a larger community of student population of India to minimal military training and national security consciousness. NCC student, besides scoring required credit points towards his UG course, is also likely to benefit in the number of jobs/ career options which gives bonus marks or priority in selection, to candidates holding NCC B and C certificate. The present research aims to study the policy review of NCC general elective credit course in universities under choice-based credit system to align with national education policy 2020 in terms reaction of NCC Cadets and associated NCC Officers. This paper also aims to provide suggestions from experts for best implementation of the NCC Open Elective and overall NCC training. Due to the availability of very few researches on this topic and Challenges of implementation of the scheme, to know the attitude of NCC Cadets and Associated NCC Officers this study was need to uptake. The research design of this study is descriptive survey research design. The sample of the present study comprised of 322 NCC cadets who were randomly selected from different states and 134 Associate NCC Officers who were also selected randomly from the different states of the India. The reaction scale used for the data collection was developed by the investigator. The major findings of the study are that most of the NCC Cadets and Associate NCC Officers given positive and favorable reaction towards the implementation of NCC open elective course in the universities and Colleges, NCC Cadets and ANOs given favorable and positive reaction towards the different aspects of the NCC training and overall NCC Education as a whole.

Keywords- NCC, NEP 2020, Course

Introduction

Introduction of NCC as Credit Course can facilitate partial realization of the felt need to expose a larger community of student population of India to minimal military training and security consciousness. Paradigm shift in NCC's positioning from extra- curricular to mainstream activity, finds favor with large majority of student population and cadets. NEP-2020 Sec 4.9 proposed to remove "hard separation between extra-curricular & co-curricular in Higher Education Institutes (HEIs)" &

offer all such activities as credit courses under Choice Based Credit System (CBCS) and may be included as skill-based course (SEC) or Value-added Course (VAC) as per new FYUGP and UGC Curriculum and Credit framework for undergraduate programs, in section 5.4 of CCFUG it is mentioned that “Students may be encouraged to enroll in activities such as NSS / NCC” and in section 5.1.9 it is also stated that “participation in activities related to National Service Scheme (NCC), National Cadet Corps (NCC), adult education/literacy initiatives, mentoring school students, and other similar activities” should be ensured. Sec 11.8 of NEP 2020 mandates all HEIs to include credit-based courses & projects in the field of community engagement and service. The existing UGC policy permits offering NCC as elective course on voluntary basis by HEIs. The UGC guidelines on CBCS extend requisite academic freedom to universities to offer NCC as a credit course if they wish. Universities/ Institutes may evolve a system/policy about Courses/Sports/NCC/NSS/Vocational courses/related courses on their own. Paradigm shift in NCC’s positioning from extra-curricular to mainstream activity, finds favor with large majority of student population and cadets. This option addresses a larger national interest of generation interest among students in matters of national defense and security apart from imbibing the basic ethos of NCC training and discipline among a much larger body of students beyond the authorized strength of 15 Lakhs NCC cadets. The NCC is open to all regular students of schools and colleges on a voluntary basis. The students have no liability for active military service. Traditionally NCC training is imparted as extra-curricular activity to volunteer students from recognized schools and colleges who enroll as cadets. NCC as a Credit Course is designed with an intent to transform NCC training into a curricular activity from an extra-curricular thereby providing academic credits to students undergoing NCC training along with other attended advantages to the cadets in the college/ university. This study is a policy review of felt need to expose a larger community of student population of India to minimal military training and national security consciousness. NCC student, besides scoring required credit points towards his UG course, is also likely to benefit in the number of jobs/ career options which gives bonus marks or priority in selection, to candidates holding NCC B and C certificate. NCC was raised with an aim of grooming both the boys and the girls, nurture them and direct their energy towards nation building by making them responsible citizens. The NCC provides exposure to the cadets in a wide range of activities. NCC

provides a distinct emphasis on Social Services, Discipline and Adventure Training. The NCC is open to all regular students of schools and colleges on a voluntary basis. The students have no liability for active military service. NCC aims and objectives are to develop character, commandership, discipline, leadership, secular outlook, and spirit of adventure and the ideals of selfless service amongst the youth of the country. Introduction of NCC as Credit Course can facilitate partial realization of the felt need to expose a larger community of student population of India to minimal military training and security consciousness. Paradigm shift in NCC's positioning from extra-curricular to mainstream activity, finds favor with large majority of student population and cadets. NCC Cadets derive direct academic credits from NCC training, including participation in camps, SS CD, etc., which was missing hitherto. This option addresses a larger national interest of generation interest among students in matters of national defense and security apart from imbibing the basic ethos of NCC training and discipline among a much larger body of students beyond the authorized strength of 15 Lakhs NCC cadets. The policy of introducing NCC as an academic credit course is a welcoming step to earn academic credits from NCC. The National Cadet Corps (NCC) is a youth development movement. It exposes cadets to a regimented way of life which is essential for inculcating the values of discipline, dutifulness, punctuality, orderliness, smartness, respect for rightful authority, good and correct work ethos and self-confidence. It has enormous potential for nation building. The NCC provides opportunities to the youth of the country for their all-round development with a sense of Duty, Commitment, Dedication, Discipline and Moral Values so that they become able leaders and useful citizens of India. The NCC provides exposure to the cadets in a wide range of activities, with a distinct emphasis on Social Services, Discipline and Adventure Training.

NCC aims to create a human resource of organized, trained and motivate youth to provide leadership in all walks of life and always available for providing a suitable environment to motivate the youth to take up a career in the Armed Forces. After independence, the present day NCC formally came into existence on 15th July 1948 through XXXI Act of Parliament. The Girls Division of the NCC was raised in July 1949. On 01st April 1950, Air Wing established with an aim for raising a second line of defense and to create a large pool of trained youth available for Armed Forces, during the First World War, University Corps was conceptualized by the British Government.

In India, was raised, with one Air squadron each at Bombay and Kolkata. The Naval Wing of the NCC was raised in July 1952, thus representing all three services in the Corps. Today the NCC has an enrolled strength of more than 13 Lakhs cadets and consists of two divisions of all the three Services i. e, the Senior Division / Senior Wing for boys/girls from colleges and the Junior Division / Junior Wing for boys/girls from schools. The Motto of NCC is 'Unity and Discipline'. The National Cadet Corps (NCC) is a youth development movement. It has enormous potential for nation building. The NCC provides opportunities to the youth of the country for their all-round development with a sense of Duty, Commitment, Dedication, Discipline and Moral Values so that they become able leaders and useful citizens. Training schedules planned for cadets ensure that the optimum benefits of the NCC organization reach maximum number of cadets. The main emphasis is on practical training which in consonance with theory is made to facilitate active participation of learner, better assimilation of knowledge, and proper development of various skills, strengthening of mind and body which is the bedrock of NCC training. The Course learning outcomes are related with individual development and also development of the society.

Due to the availability of very few researches on this topic and challenges of Job Satisfaction of Associated NCC Officers, Challenges of implementation, to know the attitude of students/ NCC Cadets, associated teachers, educational administrators and Associated Army Officers this study needs to uptake. The present study intends to review the expected learning outcomes in terms of reaction of different stake holders. Introduction of NCC as Credit Course can facilitate partial realization of the felt need to expose a larger community of student population of India to minimal military training and security consciousness, recommendations of NEP 2020, UGC Curriculum and Credit framework for Under Graduate Programs this study need to uptake.

Social impact of the study

The present study has wide social impact as NCC cadets are the students of universities and colleges. These students represent the community and school; colleges are the miniature of the society. The aims of NCC are to develop character, camaraderie, discipline, and secular outlook, the spirit of adventure, sportsman spirit and ideals of selfless service amongst cadets by working in teams, honing qualities

such as self-discipline, self-confidence, self-reliance and dignity of labor in the cadets. To create a pool of organized, trained and motivated youth with leadership qualities in all walks of life, who will serve the Nation regard less of which career they choose. NCC aims to provide a conducive environment to motivate young Indians to choose the Armed Forces as a career. Therefore, the present study deals with the quality of NCC training hence it has a wide social impact. The NCC is a responsive, learning and continuously evolving organization. Its activity is guided by certain Core Values that NCC endeavors to instill among all ranks of the NCC. These include a sense of patriotic commitment to encourage cadets to contribute to national development, Respect for diversities in religion, language, culture, ethnicity, life style and habitat to instill a sense of National unity and social cohesion, abiding commitment to learn and adhere to the norms and values enshrined in the Indian Constitution. Understanding the value of a just and impartial exercise of authority, Ability to participate in community development and other social program, A healthy life style free of substance abuse and other unhealthy practices, Sensitivity to the needs of poor and socially disadvantaged fellow citizens, Inculcating habits of restraint and self-awareness, Understanding the values of honesty, truthfulness, self-sacrifice, perseverance and hard work and Respect for knowledge, wisdom and the power of ideas.

Objectives

The objectives of present study are as follows

1. To study the reaction of NCC Cadets towards NCC CBCS open elective course and overall NCC training.
2. To study the reaction of Associated NCC Officers towards NCC CBCS open elective course and overall NCC training.
3. To compare the reaction of Male and Female NCC Cadets towards NCC CBCS open elective course and overall NCC training.
4. To compare the reaction of Rural and Urban NCC Cadets towards NCC CBCS open elective course and overall NCC training.
5. To compare the reaction of Arts, Science and Engineering NCC Cadets towards NCC CBCS open elective course and overall NCC training.
6. To study the reaction of NCC Army Officers towards the policy of introducing NCC as an CBCS elective course.

Hypotheses

The hypotheses of present study are as follows:

1. There is no significant difference between reaction of Male and Female NCC Cadets towards NCC CBCS open elective course and overall NCC training.
2. There is no significant difference between Rural and Urban NCC Cadets towards NCC CBCS open elective course and overall NCC training.
3. There is no significant difference between Arts, Science and Engineering NCC Cadets towards NCC CBCS open elective course and overall NCC training.

Sample

The total population of NCC cadets in the India is approx. 13 lakh cadets. The sample of the present study comprised of 322 NCC cadets who were randomly selected from different states of India and 134 Associated NCC officers who were also selected randomly from the different states of the India. The cadets and ANOs were from Assam, West Bengal, Arunachal Pradesh, Maharashtra, Haryana, Telangana, Odisha, Jharkhand, Andhra Pradesh, New Delhi, Tamilnadu, Uttar Pradesh, Kerala, Madhya Pradesh, Mizoram and Nagaland. The subjects of sample are belonging to different locations, different gender, different academic streams, different socio-economic status, different educational qualifications and from rural and urban residence area. The language and culture of different state peoples are different. The qualitative data were collected through a semi structured interview from 10 army officers and 10 college principals who were selected with purposive sampling technique.

Gender wise and academic discipline/ Stream wise table of NCC cadets

				Total
		Male	Female	
Academic Disciplines / Stream	Humanities and Social Sciences	93	64	157
	Engineering	39	11	50
	Science	52	24	76
	Commerce	25	14	39
Total		209	113	322

Research Design

The research design of the present study was descriptive survey research design.

Tools

In the present study data were collected in respect of feedback and attitude and reactions towards NCC open elective course and overall NCC training from NCC cadets and associated NCC officers with the help of a reaction scales developed by the investigator. The feedback and attitude of educational administrator and army Officers were collected with the help of semi structured interview.

Reaction scale of NCC cadets

Reaction of NCC cadets towards NCC elective course was assessed by reaction scale developed by the investigator. The aspects to which statements belonged were feasibility of course, accommodation of credits, willingness of administrators, financial constraints, career avenues after NCC, overall reaction towards NCC as open elective, large credit compared to other open electives, fulfillment NEP 2020 objectives, SSCD support, academic continuity, B & C exam help, Institutional training improvement, credit earn, infrastructure institute support, same academic value, syllabus design, camp credits, SSCD extra burden, weapon training, Scholarships does not motivating, NCC help in good CGP, Credits earn with physical training, Drill, map reading, FC & BC, Infantry weapons and infantry battalions, motivates to join the Armed Forces, New carrier avenues, SSCD participation, Enhance national integration, SSCD extra burden, Not interested in drill and physical, Firing exp with .22 Rifle, Fire Fighting training, Bonding cadets from diversified cultural background, Respect and Tolerance for gender, race, ethnicity, culture, religion diversity, acquaint cadets with navigation and map reading, boost confidence in public speaking, Not boost the spirit of courage and endurance among the cadets, Enhance the skills of time management, Imbibes self-discipline, secular ideas, camaraderie and selfless service, Steadfastly engaged in nation building by promoting a nationalism, keep physically fit, Gives experience of regimental life, Enormous potential for nation building, Exposure for Social Services, Discipline and Adventure Training, Open to all students on a voluntary basis, motivate the youth to take up a career in the Armed Forces, Making better and responsible citizens of our country, Promotes feeling of selfless service for the nation and society, Improves punctuality among the cadets, boosting the feeling of nationalism and patriotism among the cadets, teaches proper health and hygiene in line area or living area, promotion of diversified cultural understanding among NCC cadets, teach the mutual respect to diversity, Enhance tolerance among diversified groups, Participation in social service and community development activities, Good habits like early to

bed and early to rise, Shaping personality of the youth through multifarious training, adventure and cultural activities, Making an able leader and useful citizens of the Country, Development character, commandership, discipline, leadership, secular outlook, spirit of adventure and the ideals of selfless service, Organized, trained and motivate youth to provide leadership in all walks of life, production of matured, disciplined and responsible citizens in the country, Helping in the development of personality and leadership, Produce citizens who are always available for the service of the nation, Inculcating the values of discipline, dutifulness, punctuality, orderliness, smartness, respect for rightful authority, good and correct work ethos and self-confidence, Preference in Selection of State Police force and CAPF, Overall reaction towards Implementation of NCC overall NCC training etc.

Procedure of data collection

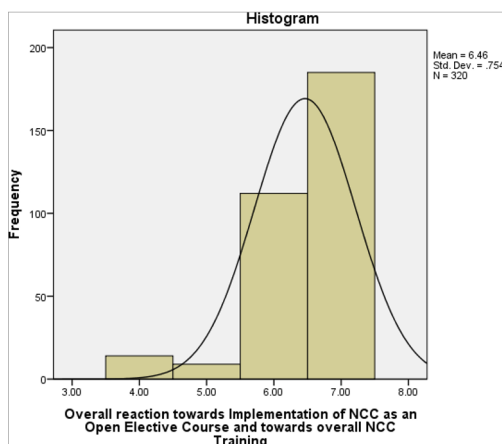
The data were collected with the help of self-developed reaction scale. Firstly, the tool was developed and validated. The necessary permission was taken with the educational administrators, Commanding officers and college teacher for the data collection. The researcher collected data in digital google form as well as physically from Associate NCC Officers, NCC cadets and Army officers. The collected data were analyzed with the help of percentage, frequency, Mean, standard deviation and t-test.

Result and findings

The result and findings of the research are given objective wise as follows.

1. Reaction of NCC cadets towards NCC CBCS open elective course and overall NCC training

NCC Cadets expressed favorable Reaction towards different aspects of NCC as an open elective course and Overall NCC training on the whole.



S.No.	Feedback Reaction towards overall NCC training and NCC Course	Frequency	Percent
1.	Very Poor	0	0%
2.	Poor	0	0%
3.	Below Average	0	0%
4.	Average	14	4.3%
5.	Above Average	9	2.8%
6.	Good	112	34.6%
7.	Excellent	187	58.0%
8.	Total	322	100%

2. Reaction of associated NCC officers towards NCC CBCS open elective course and overall ncc training

The Associated NCC Officers expressed favorable Reaction towards different aspects of NCC as an open elective course and Overall NCC training on the whole.

3. Reaction of male and female NCC cadets towards NCC CBCS open elective course and overall NCC training

The Reaction feedback of NCC cadets of both Males and females NCC cadets was found to be same extent or similar on different aspects of NCC as an open elective course and Overall NCC training.

4. Reaction of rural and urban NCC cadets towards NCC CBCS open elective course and overall NCC training

The Reaction feedback of NCC cadets of both Rural and Urban NCC cadets was found to be same extent or similar on different aspects of NCC as an open elective course and Overall NCC training. The attitude of both Males and Females equally favorable towards different aspects of NCC as an open elective course and Overall NCC training on the whole.

5. Reaction of arts, science and engineering NCC cadets towards NCC CBCS open elective course and overall ncc training

Students belonging to Engineering group were found more favorable attitude in terms of feedback reaction towards NCC open elective course and overall NCC training; to students belonging to Humanities and Social Science and science group in feedback reaction towards NCC open elective course and overall NCC training; while students belonging to three pairs that are Commerce-Science and Commerce-Humanities & social sciences and Commerce- Sciences were found same extent of feedback reaction towards NCC open elective course and overall NCC training.

6. Reaction of NCC army officers towards the policy of introducing NCC as an CBCS elective course

Army officers and College principals given positive feedback on implementation of NCC as an open elective course and overall NCC training and also given emphasis on improvement of NCC military training, academic implementation of NCC course and improvement required in terms of benefits for NCC cadets and associated NCC officers.

Conclusion

The present study revealed that NCC cadets, Associated NCC Officers, Army officers and College principals have favorable positive attitude towards implementation of NCC open elective course and overall NCC training. A favorable reaction found irrespective of Gender and Residential Background of NCC cadets, Thus, this study has implications for NCC cadets, Associated NCC Officers, College Principals, Educational Planners, Curriculum Developers. NCC cadets are the future citizens of our country the study findings shows that majority of NCC cadets have positive and favorable attitude towards NCC military training which help them in gaining minimum military training, discipline, personality development, good turn out and confidence in presentation, therefore the step of including NCC as an academic course is useful step for NCC cadets and students of our country. This study is useful for Educational Planners, Curriculum Developers as students and teachers demanded more quality curriculum, academic course and academic calendar space for NCC training. Therefore, the educational planners and curriculum developers can plan appropriate academic credits and curriculum for the NCC open elective and overall NCC training.

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Mahapursha Srimanta Sankardeva's Legacy in Education: Bridging Tradition and Modernity

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Abstract

Mahapurusha Srimanta Sankardeva was a great spiritual leader of Assam. He propagated Neo-Vaishnavite movement in Assam. Sankardeva and his disciples in Assam aimed to eliminate illiteracy by providing education to the masses. They established Satras, Namgharas, translated literature, composed drama, and poems, and emphasized adult and vocational education to achieve their goals.

Sankardeva significantly contributed to literature and language through his literary works, translations and propagation of the Eka-Sarana-Nama-Dharama, imparting education to the masses and introducing scientific curriculum and teaching methods, which still influence the present education system.

Sankardeva also contributed to aims of education (Moral aim, Spiritual aim, Vocational aim, aim of universal brotherhood, peace and inclusive society, aim of all round development), adult education, methods of teaching (play way method, learning by doing method, group discussion method, storytelling method), curriculum etc.

This paper aims to study the contribution of Srimanta Sankardeva towards the field of education and its relevance in present time through systematics review of the existing literature.

Keywords- *Education, aims of education, methods of teaching, curriculum, education through literary work, Eka-Sarana-Nama-Dharma, Satra, Namghara.*

Introduction

Mahapurusha Srimanta Sankardeva (1449–1568), a towering spiritual reformer, cultural icon, and social visionary of Assam, holds an enduring legacy that transcends religious, cultural, and educational spheres. As the founder of the Ekasarana Dharma and the architect of the neo-Vaishnavite movement in Assam, his contributions to literature, music, dance, drama, art, and social reform have shaped Assamese society for centuries. Among these contributions, his educational philosophy and practice—although less explored in scholarly discourse—remain profoundly relevant in the contemporary quest to bridge tradition with modernity in the field of education.

Mahapurusha Srimanta Sankardeva initiated the Neo-Vaishnavite movement in Assam which was a part of Bhakti movement. Dr. Bimal Mazumdar (2014) stated that Sankardeva was an extraordinarily gifted man, widely travelled, sound in traditional Sanskrit learning, poet, playwright and musician par excellence. Dr. Mazumdar also mentioned in his book about Sankardeva as - “He gave to Assam a new discipline of faith and helped Assam to break away with a past with its complicated esoteric doctrines and its unmeaning practices and gave to the people something simple and straightforward, divested of all questionable associations or implications. He was the greatest builder of Assam by bringing in a purer spiritual life, though circumstances prevented his influence from being spread into other parts of India, as a religious leader he is unquestionably one of the greatest India has produced, and he deserved to be mentioned with Sankaracharya, Ramanujacharya, Basavanna, Ramananda, Kabir, Caitanya, Mira Bai, Guru Nanak, Tulsidasa. He was truly the medium through whom the spiritual light of medieval India as a whole shone upon the life of Assam.”

Srimanta Sankardeva was born in 1449 AD in the village of Alipukhuri near Bardowa in Nagaon district (present) of Assam. His father, Siromoni Kusumbar Bhuyan was the chief of Bara-Bhuyan clan. His mother Satyasandha died after his birth. After death of his father, Sankardeva was brought up by his grandmother Khersuti Ai. At the age of 12 years he started his formal education under the guidance of Mahendra Kandali. During his schooling Sankardeva composed a poem only using consonants and without using any vowel.

Sankardeva propagated *Eka-Sarana-Nama-Dharma*, the religious faith that belief on one supreme god (Vishnu-Krishna) and to surrender to that supreme god. For propagation of the *Eka-Sarana-Nama-Dharma*, Sankardeva composed many literary

works like poems, prose, drama, songs etc. He also established community prayer hall known as Naama Ghar and Monetary known as Satra.

In his book “Descriptive bibliography of Sankardeva studies” Dr. Bimal Mazumdar (2014) rightly stated that – Sankardeva was a versatile saint- a religious preceptor, social reformer, philosopher, poet, dramatist, artist actor, singer, lyricist, musician, yogic expert, ace swimmer, a master weaver, expert artisan and what not. He contributed to humanity through propagation of universal love and peace, justice, liberty, equality and fraternity all these for the benefit of mankind. Nripendra Nath Sarma (1996) stated in his PhD thesis that Sankardeva was the Dean and Faculty of Art and literature, social science and culture. He was a poet, a dramatist, a prose writer, a translator, an artist, a player, a preacher, a teacher, a reformer and even a strong rebel.

In 1568, Srimanta Sankardeva, breathed his last at the age of 120 years.

Sankardeva’s educational legacy is rooted in a holistic vision that emphasized character-building, moral instruction, community engagement, and experiential learning through arts and culture. His use of *Namgharas* (prayer and community halls) and *Satras* (monastic institutions) as centers of both religious instruction and social learning exemplifies an indigenous model of education that integrated spirituality with practical life skills and cultural enrichment. His writings in Assamese and Brajavali, his plays (*Ankiya Naat*), songs (*Borgeet*), and dance-dramas (such as *Sattriya*) became tools for informal yet effective pedagogy, nurturing critical thinking, ethical awareness, and communal harmony.

In the context of modern education, especially within a globalized world that often grapples with cultural alienation, identity crises, and a mechanized learning environment, Sankardeva’s approach offers vital insights. His model promotes learner-centered education rooted in local culture, creative expression, and moral values—elements often missing from contemporary curricula. As India envisions an educational renaissance through the National Education Policy (NEP) 2020, revisiting Sankardeva’s philosophy becomes timely and significant. His legacy presents a framework for an education system that is not only inclusive and democratic but also deeply connected to the socio-cultural ethos of the learners.

This paper explores Mahapurusha Srimanta Sankardeva’s contributions to education from a historical and philosophical perspective and examines how his

ideas can inform present-day educational practices. By analyzing his life, works, and institutional innovations, the study aims to highlight how Sankardeva's legacy can help bridge the gap between traditional knowledge systems and modern pedagogical paradigms, offering a culturally responsive and morally anchored vision of education for contemporary India and beyond.

Objective of the Study

The primary objective of this study is to explore and analyze the educational philosophy and practices of Mahapurusha Srimanta Sankardeva, with the aim of understanding their relevance and applicability in the context of modern education. The study seeks to examine how his teachings—centered on moral education, spiritual growth, cultural integration, and community-based learning—can contribute to shaping a value-oriented and culturally rooted educational framework that bridges traditional wisdom with contemporary pedagogical needs.

Need and Significance of the Study

The present era of rapid globalization, technological advancement, and cultural homogenization has led to a growing disconnect between modern education and traditional values. In this context, revisiting the educational legacy of Mahapurusha Srimanta Sankardeva becomes highly significant. Sankardeva's philosophy, rooted in moral development, spiritual enlightenment, cultural expression, and community harmony, presents a time-tested model that addresses the holistic development of individuals—something that modern education often overlooks. His use of local language, indigenous art forms, and inclusive pedagogy resonates strongly with the objectives of contemporary educational reforms, such as India's National Education Policy (NEP) 2020, which emphasizes value-based education, cultural rootedness, and experiential learning. This study is needed not only to critically analyze and document Sankardeva's contributions to education but also to explore how his principles can be meaningfully integrated into modern curricula to nurture responsible, ethical, and culturally aware citizens. Furthermore, in a time of rising intolerance, social unrest, and moral degradation, the relevance of his teachings in promoting peace, compassion, and unity is more urgent than ever. By bridging tradition and modernity, this research seeks to offer insights into how Sankardeva's educational ideals can serve

as a transformative force in reimagining education for present and future generations.

According to Priti Deka (2017), there is an urgent necessity to effectively apply the educational philosophy of Srimanta Sankardeva in today's society. Such implementation could play a crucial role in nurturing moral values, spiritual awareness, character formation, and holistic personality development among the younger generation. Presently, society is witnessing a decline in moral and spiritual education, leading to increasing instances of cruelty, hatred, and inhuman behavior. This moral erosion has contributed to growing violence and insurgency, disturbing the peace and harmony of the community. Embracing the teachings of the revered saint Sankardeva could help the youth address and resolve many of these conflicts and societal issues.

Methodology

This study is based on secondary data. To study the contribution of Sankardeva's education system on modern education system, the researchers reviewed some existing related literature. These literatures were collected from books, journals, Shodhganga website, Wikipedia, YouTube etc. This study is descriptive in nature.

Review of Literature:

Dr. Sanjib Kumar Borkakoti (2015) stated that, Sankardeva and his disciples developed various means of educating peoples of their time. Through his literary works, songs, drama which contains most parts of the curriculum, they disseminate education among masses. Through the performance of his drama, songs and other literary and poetic works at satras and Naamghars, people get knowledge about various values, life lessons, vocational skills etc. which relevance still exist in present time.

Priti Deka (2017) stated on her Ph.D. thesis that, Sankardeva was a brilliant educator and philosopher. Established by Sankardeva, the Namghara and Satra institutions operate on the democratic principle of religious education. Sankardeva attempted to uphold society morally by teaching the masses moral education based on values and, in the truest sense, by fostering a work culture among the Assamese people. He did not limit himself to merely preaching Bhakti doctrines. Sankardeva projected certain social values as his ideals in the context of society after surviving a very difficult social life. Sankardeva envisioned oneness in duality and unity in diversity.

In his research study “Relation Between Mahapurusha Srimanta Sankardeva And Assamese Society- A Brief Study” Abu Anowar Aminul Hoque (2020) stated that, Although Srimanta Sankardeva is primarily revered as a religious saint in Assamese society, his remarkable contributions to literature and culture have earned him the revered title of Mahapurusha among the people of Assam. His impact on Assamese society is vast and far-reaching. Many of the cultural and spiritual elements that define Assam's identity today can be traced back to his efforts. His legacy encompasses the promotion of religion, development of arts and literature, creation of drama and theatrical performances, efforts to eradicate untouchability, unification of diverse communities, and the establishment and enrichment of the Satra culture—all of which have played a vital role in shaping and uplifting Assamese society.

Shyamali Hazarika (2020) opined in her PhD thesis “A study on social philosophy of Sankardeva with special focus on his eka sarana nama dharama” that, through various means like drama, songs, paintings, music, literature etc. Sankardeva tried to spread the seed of secularism. Which in turn made the Assamese society inclusive and peoples of different tribes, casts, religion showed faith on him and take in his satras for education. He also emphasised on the cleanliness and physical education. He practised yoga for physical health. In present time physical education is an important subject in education system. Again Government launces grand programme like “Swacha Bharat Abhiyan” to make the country clean.

Abul Hussain (2021) stated in his study entitled “Contribution of Mahapurush Srimanta Sankardeva to Assamese Literature and Culture” that, Srimanta Sankardeva contributed to a great extent in the field of Assamese literature and culture. Through his cultural and literary activities, he disseminates education among common people.

Priyasri Devi et al. (2022) in their research study entitled “Satriya culture and Srimanta Sankardeva's contributions to education” stated that, Srimanta Sankardeva and his disciples played a significant role in promoting education through the establishment of Satras, which offered both formal and informal learning. While formal education was provided through tols supported by affluent Satras, informal education effectively reached the general masses, who were largely excluded from traditional learning systems. Despite widespread illiteracy and limited access to education for common people, Sankardeva's movement made a conscious effort to spread knowledge and social awareness. Over time, the Satra institutions took on the

responsibility of educating and enlightening society through their own initiatives.

According to Phuloma Daimary, Srimanta Sankardeva disseminate education through poetic works, bhakti theory, drama, songs, satriya dance. Sankardeva's poetic works are very strong instrument for aesthetic development of students. Bhakti theory of Srimanta Sankardeva has a great educational significance. It helps in the development of various democratic values like brotherhood, unity, equality, love, affection, peace etc. among the people, attainment of which are also objectives NEP 2020.

Educational Contribution of Srimanta Sankardeva

Unlike other educationist, Srimanta Sankardeva did not engaged himself only in the field of education. Through his religious and social activities, Sankardeva disseminate education to general people. Contrary to popular belief, Srimanta Sankardeva was not just a religious leader but also, in his own unique style, an educator. He assisted the populace in learning behavioural science and the scriptures. Even in its rudimentary form, social science was present in his writing. His writing occasionally analyses the state of society. His lessons were replete with suggestions for the perfect way of living. The primary focus of his instruction is ethics. People were advised not to be arrogant. He pioneered adult education on a global scale. Additionally, vocational education knowledge was imparted by Srimanta Sankardeva.

Education was a privilege, that was only available to a select few members of the upper class of society during the Sankardeva era. The general populace continued to be submerged in a gloomy abyss of ignorance and illiteracy. Within the vast sea of illiterate masses, the enlightened and socially conscious disciple constituted a tiny minority. Nevertheless, Srimanta Sankardeva continued to spread knowledge and wisdom in his own unique ways. He wrote numerous plays, songs, prayers, and philosophical essays. A significant amount of the curriculum used in the residential school back then was included in this. The writings of Srimanta Sankardeva contained a strong emphasis on the curriculum. As a result, when his plays were performed, his songs were sung, and his hymns were chanted, people were taught the same material that they had learned in residential schools and were brought up according to those standards.

Srimanta Sankardeva's contribution to various field of education can be discussed as bellow:

(a) Contribution to aims of Education: Priti Deka (2017) on her PhD thesis explained the aims of education of Sankardeva in her PhD thesis as follows: both formal and informal education were imparted by Satras during the time of Sankardeva. Sankardeva's aims of education can be explained as-

Moral Aim: Numerous passages in Sankardeva's writings promote virtue and condemn vices, respectively, as the universally recognized way of living. Truthfulness, kindness, hospitality, temperance, contentment, patience, purity of heart, restraint over passions, and indifference to worldly pleasures are examples of these moral virtues. It is acknowledged that kindness or nonviolence towards all living things is a great virtue. He emphasized on universal equality and inclusiveness of all through his literary work Kirtana Ghosa as:

Kukura Candala Garddabharo atmarama

Janiya sabako padi kariba pranama

(Even the souls of dogs, Candala, asses are verity of God, considering this idea in mind they should be saluted.)

Sankardeva emphasized on development of human values. He gave the message to help the needy people and animal by his writings:

Jagatara punya mane jana nista kari

Prani upakara alpako nuhi sari

Hena jani pranika abhaya diya dana

(All the animals should be helped and well protected considering them to be the souls of God.)

Sankardeva addresses truth and nonviolence on both a social and personal level. Any action, whether it be social, economic, or individual, must start with the truth.

Nahi nahi ana dharma jana satya kari

Satyase ache rahi mahi caracara

Satya sama dharma aru nahi purusara.

(Truth is the essence of all actions and it is the greatest virtue of man. There is no other dharma like truth. The whole Universe sustains because of the truth.)

Sankardeva emphasised the importance of moral purity in daily life for a

healthy society. Therefore, he counselled living a life based on truth, non-violence, self-discipline, and refraining from greed, falsehood, desire, anger, and other negative emotions.

Spiritual aim: One of the main spiritual aim of Sankardeva's education is to belief in one god i.e. Krishna. He preached *Eka-Sarana-Nama-Dharama* for all people of irrespective of caste, creed, class and religion. *Eka-Sarana-Nama-Dharama* emphasized on worship of only one god (Krishna) that make people more focused, more disciplined. He also emphasized to overcome the love for materialistic goods and other desires by devoting oneself to god.

Vocational aim: Sankardeva realized the importance of vocational education to improve the livelihood and economic condition of people and hence he emphasized on the development of vocational education. Through Satras, Sankardeva imparted various vocational training to his followers. Some of the important vocations that were imparted in Satras are handicraft, various works of wood, cane works, bamboo works, mask making, preparation of Sanchi-Paat and ink for writing manuscripts etc. All these vocations are still practised in many Satras of Assam.

Aim of universal brotherhood, peace and inclusive society: One of the main aims of Sankardeva's education system is universal brotherhood, peace and an inclusive society where all people can leave with each other with same dignity. He tried to achieve this aim by including people from various castes, class, religion and creed as his disciple to propagate *Eka-Sarana-Nama-Dharma*.

Kirita, Kachari

Khasi, Garo, Miri

Yavana Kanka Goala

Asama Muluka

Dhoba je Turuka

Kubacha Mlechcha Chandala.

(The Bodos, the Kacharis, the Khasis, the Garos, the Misings, the Muslims, the cow rearers, the launderers, the kochs, the untouchables, the pyre lighters in the land of Assam.)

So it can be said that Srimanta Sankardeva was the first person to introduce the concept of "Bar Assam" (Undivided Assam).

He also worked for the eradication of untouchability from the society and try to established peace.

Aim of all round development : Sankardeva emphasized on all round development of people i.e. Physical development, moral development, spiritual development, mental development, social development etc. For physical development he emphasized on practice of yoga. He himself use to practice yoga for physical development. For spiritual development he composed many songs, drama, plays etc. and used to discuss spiritual and religious topics in Satras.

(b) Contribution to Literature and Language: It was Srimanta Sankardeva who put all the knowledge of the Bhagavata Purana in precise form in “Gunamala”. It is only possible for Sankardeva to put an elephant (Bhagavata Purana) in a “Bhuruka” (a small pot) (Gunamala). But it is not an easy task to write about all the literary works of Srimanta Sankardeva with in a small amount of word. Poet Jatindra Nath Duwara rhighly said about Sankardeva as -

*“Tomar jibani dev! likhe Ene saddhya kar,
Gotei Asom juri bistrita Jibani jar.”*

(Who can write thy story, O great saint?)

The founder of the Bhakti movement in Assam, Mahapurush Srimanta Sankardeva was also a pioneer in the fields of education, language and literature, art and culture. He contributed to the field of literature and language in many ways. He composed an extensive number of books, including translations, commentaries, and original works, to explain his philosophy and practical applications. Since these texts were always needed to govern daily tasks, they surely promoted the study of literature.

The renaissance of Assamese literature occurs during the Neo-Vaisnavite age in Assam. The teachings of the faith that Sankardeva and Madhabdeva, his favourite disciple, wished to spread, were explained and elaborated in a great deal of songs, dramas, verses, and narratives that they wrote. Sanskrit language was the only language during the period of Sankardeva for religion as well as for education. It was the great Sankardeva, who translated the religious books from Sankrit to Assamese language for the common people. Sankardeva developed a language known as Brajvali language for composing the Bargeetas.

Various writings of Srimanta Sankardeva can be categorized as (Nripendra Nath Sarma, 1996) –

1. **Drama and Ankiya Nats :** Keli Gopal, Kaliya damana, Ram Vijaya, Rukmini Haran, Parijat Harana, Patni Prashada, China Yatra, Patni prasad,

Janma Yatra, Kangsa Badha. '*Chihna Jatra*' is his first drama or Nat. It contained various portraits of heaven, music, songs, dances, dialogue and acting.

2. **The Kirtana-Ghosa** : The unique translation and sum total of the Bhagavata, the Gita, the Padma Purana and the Brahmapurana. His Kirtan-ghosa is commonly referred to as a "Kalpataru" or beehive, where anyone can get sweet and delectable food. Children's stories, academic literature and language, and others' songs and recitations are all available in it. As a representation of the holy text, there ought to be a copy of Kirtan-ghosa in every Assamese Hindu home.
3. **The Dasama** : One of the four Vaisnava Vedas written on the activities of child Sri Krishna.
4. Translation of the various chapter of the Bhagavata: 1st, 2nd, 3rd, 8th, 10th, 11th and 12th Chapters.
5. **Stories** : Harichandra Upakhyana, Amritamanthana, Ajamil Upakhyana and Balichalana.
6. **Bhakti based books** : Bhakti Pradipa, Anadi Patana, Bhakti Ratnakara, Gunamala, Niminaba Sidha Sangbada and Uttarakenda Ramayana.
7. **Bargeet**: Bargeets are another type of Sankardeva's incomparable literary work. These songs of devotion were and remain intended for use in prayer. Singing Bargeet used to be considered a necessary component of literacy. These songs are more lyrical than other prayer songs, more beautiful than other poems, more educational than other classic texts, more visually appealing than music, and finally more timeless than written works of literature. These Bargeets were originally composed by Sankardeva and were written in a combination of Brajavali and Maithili. According to Dr. Banikanta Kakati these are the "noble numbers" on the activities of Lord Krishna.

It is said that out of his 240 Bargeets, not more than 41 are presently available. Maximum of them were destroyed in accidental fire.

8. **Bhatimas** : Bhatimas are those songs based on god which are sung during

Ankiya Nat. Types of Bhatimas are: Deva bhatima – panegyrics to God. Naat bhatima – for use in dramas. Raja bhatima – panegyrics to king Nara Narayana.

9. **Totayas**

10. **Chatihās.**

(c) Contribution to Adult Education : During the period of Sankardeva, maximum people were illiterate. Sankardeva clearly understood that to practice Eka-Sarana-Nama-Dharama by the general people it is important to literate them. For these purposes Satras and Namgharas play an important role to educate the adult people of Assam. Sankardeva composed many songs, plays, prose, books and translated many literatures from Sanskrit language in Assamese and Borojāvali language for the general people. It helps in increasing adult literacy.

(d) Contribution to Methods of teaching : To impart education among people Sankardeva used various methods of teaching like: play way method, learning by doing method, group discussion method, storytelling method etc.

Play way method : Sankardeva composed many drama i.e. Ankiya Naat through which he used to give spiritual, moral, and social knowledge to the people which is actually play way method of teaching. He used to wear mask for various religious characters, draw various portraits to make the method of teaching effective.

Learning by doing method : Through Satras, Sankardeva used to give various vocational trainings to people. This helps the people to learn things by doing themselves.

Group discussion method : In Satras and Namgharas, Sankardeva used to sit with people and discuss various spiritual and social topics. General people put questions and Sankardeva and his disciples used to answer those and discuss on those questions.

Storytelling Method : Sankardev used story telling method to explain the knowledge of various religious books so that the common people can understand easily.

(e) Contribution to Curriculum: In her PhD thesis, Priti Deka mentioned about curriculum of the education system of Sankardeva as - the subjects included in the

curriculum of teaching were—Mother tongue (Brajavali, Sanskrit), ancient lores and scriptures (the Vedas, the Upanisadas, the Puranas, the Samhitas, the Ramayana, the Mahabharata, Vyakarana, Nyaya Sastra, Kavyas, Philosophy, Psychology, Yoga, Moral education and Vocational education including handy craft, drawing and painting, music, dramatization, dancing and cottage industry.

(f) Contribution of Satra and Namgharas to Education : Sankardeva established many Satras and Namgharas which had a great role on imparting both formal and informal education to the masses of his period as well as to the present society. Through the establishment of several tols, which were tended by a few wealthy Satras, it provided formal education. For the majority of people, the Satras' informal education was incredibly successful. The villagers came to the Namghara during the Satra to hear the exposition and recitation of several scriptures, including Kirtana Ghosha and the Bhagavata-Purana. They gained a great deal of knowledge about the scriptures as a result of their participation in numerous religious debates and communal prayer services. Here the 'bhakat' (pupil monks) reside under the supervision of the Satradhikar, who is in charge of their material well-being as well as their spiritual development. The trainee monk receives instruction in liturgy, doctrinal practices, discipline, and monastic life during the probationary term. Additional education is provided to the monks by Bhagavati and Pathak. Monks are also hired to create original works in Assamese or Sanskrit, as well as to translate texts from Sanskrit into the language. It is a custom among the monks to copy and illustrate manuscripts and to gather 'Caritputhis', which are biographies of Satra leaders and vaishnava saints, to depict the ideal of the vaishnavite individual's life.

Satras also provided vocational education like cultivation, wood curving, cane and bamboo work, paper and ink preparation, musical instrument preparation, painting, weaving, preparation of mask and many more.

Bridging Sankardeva's Education system with modern education system

Srimanta Sankardeva's education system, method of teaching, educational philosophy, aims of education etc. are still relevant, beneficial and effective in modern time. The researcher tried to analyze and bridge Sankardeva's education with modern education system as discussed below:

Srimanta Sankardeva's Education System and Its Relevance in NEP 2020: Srimanta Sankardeva, the 15th-16th century saint, scholar, and cultural reformer of Assam, established an inclusive and holistic education system through his Namghara and Satra institutions. His system integrated spiritual, moral, artistic, and intellectual education, focusing on bhakti (devotion), ethical living, literature, music, drama (Ankiya Naat), and community learning. Education under Sankardeva aimed at character building, cultural development, and social harmony rather than mere literacy. This aligns deeply with NEP 2020, which emphasises holistic and multidisciplinary education, integration of art, music, and ethics into the curriculum, and nurturing values such as empathy, respect, and unity. NEP 2020's vision of rootedness in India's cultural heritage while promoting critical thinking and creativity mirrors Sankardeva's approach that combined knowledge with cultural and moral grounding. Furthermore, NEP's focus on community participation and local knowledge systems reflects the Namghara model, where learning was community-driven and contextually relevant. Thus, Sankardeva's education system remains highly relevant today as NEP 2020 aspires to develop students into responsible, ethical, and culturally aware citizens with 21st-century competencies.

Inclusive education: Priti Deka (2017) stated in her PhD thesis that, during the time of Sankardeva in Assam, most of the people were not able to take formal education. It was only accessible to some selected upper section of the society. Feeling the need and importance of education, Sankardeva developed an education system which is inclusive in nature. Through Satras, Sankardeva and his disciples disseminate education among masses of the society. Irrespective of cast, religion, creed, socio-

economic status etc. all can come to take education in Satras. This inclusiveness of his education system is also relevant in modern time.

In present time, various educational act, policies, programmes are developed/enacted to make the education more inclusive. Government enacted various act like Right to education act (RTE) 2009, Right of Persons with Disability act (RPWD) 2016, NPE 1986, Integrated Education for Disabled Children (IEDC) programme 1974 etc. to make the classrooms more inclusive and accessible for all irrespective of cast, creed, gender, religion etc. In addition to that Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan (SSA), Samagra Siksha Abhiyan and NEP 2020 also aims in inclusive education. In this connection, to make our classrooms more inclusive, Sankardeva's education system, systems of Satras, his philosophy may be relevant. His philosophy of inclusiveness says that –

Kukura Candala Garddabharo atmarama

Janiya sabako padi kariba pranama

(Even the souls of dogs, Candala, asses are verity of God, considering this idea in mind they should be saluted.)

Kirita, Kachari

Khasi, Garo, Miri

Yavana Kanka Goala

Asama Muluka

Dhoba je Turuka

Kubacha Mlechcha Chandala.

(The Bodos, the Kacharis, the Khasis, the Garos, the Misings, the Muslims, the cow rearers, the launderers, the kochs, the untouchables, the pyre lighters in the land of Assam.)

Aims of education : Various aims of Srimanta Sankardeva's education system are moral aims, spiritual aims, vocational aims, aim of universal brotherhood, peace and inclusive society and aim of all round development of people (Priti Deka, 2017). All these aims of education are relevant in the context of National Education Policy (NEP) 2020. NEP 2020 outlines several aims of education to ensure holistic, inclusive and future-ready learning. Key aims of education mentioned in NEP 2020 are:

(a) Holistic development:

- To develop all aspect of learners intellectual, social, physical, emotional and moral values.
- To develop cognitive, affective and psychomotor domains equally.

(b) Development of critical thinking and creativity:

- To nurture analytical and problem solving skills.
- Encourage creativity, innovation and adaptability to face global challenges.

(c) Building character and ethical values :

- To inculcate constitutional values, empathy, respect for others cleanliness, courtesy, democratic spirit and a sense of responsibility.

(d) Preparing for productive life:

- To prepare students for gainful employment, entrepreneurship and economic participation.
- Develop vocational skills and life skills from school level onwards.

(e) Promotion of multidisciplinary education :

- Breaking rigid boundaries between disciplines for better understanding and application of knowledge.

(f) Rootedness and pride in India :

- To develop knowledge of India's tradition, culture, language and heritage while being open to global knowledge and skills.

(g) Equity and inclusion :

- Ensuring education for all irrespective of socio-economic, gender or regional barriers to promote social justice.

(h) Developing global citizens

- Making learners aware of global issues and enabling them to contribute meaningfully to society and the world.

(i) Scientific temper and evidence based thinking :

- To foster curiosity, logical reasoning and an attitude of inquiry and scientific

approach towards life.

(j) Lifelong learning :

- To make learners capable of continuous learning, self-improvement and adaptation to changes in knowledge and technology.

It is clear from the above discussion that Srimanta sankardeva's aims of education are relevant in the context of NEP 2020. So, it can be concluded that, the system of disseminate education among people may be beneficial to achieve the aims of education in present time also.

Vocational Education : Apart from spiritual and moral teachings, Srimanta Sankardeva's education system was also included practical skills essential for daily life and community development. In his Satras and Namgharas, learners were engaged in various vocational activities such as mask-making, manuscript painting, weaving, crafting musical instruments, and performance arts like drama, dance, and music, which required discipline and skill. These activities empowered individuals economically and enhanced their dignity of labour, creativity, and self-reliance. His system integrated vocational skills with cultural and moral education, ensuring learners were productive, responsible, and capable of contributing to society. In present times, when vocational education is gaining importance to develop employability skills and promote self-employment, Sankardeva's approach is highly relevant. NEP 2020 also emphasises integrating vocational education from early stages to make students skilled, self-dependent, and ready for diverse livelihoods. Sankardeva's model inspires modern education to include traditional skills, local crafts, arts, and cultural practices as vocational training, thereby preserving heritage while ensuring economic empowerment. Thus, his education system remains a guiding light in strengthening vocational education with cultural relevance, ethical grounding, and skill development for sustainable living.

Method of Teaching : Srimanta Sankardeva's methods of teaching were informal yet deeply effective. Namgharas and Satras were used as centres of learning

where students learned through observation, participation, discussion, and community activities. He used storytelling, drama (Ankiya Naat), music (Borgeet), and dance (Sattriya Nritya) to impart values, religious teachings, history and philosophy, making learning enjoyable and holistic. His method emphasised understanding over rote memorisation and aimed at character building, discipline, and social harmony. Teachers (Gurus) in his system acted as role models, guiding learners with compassion and personal attention. In present times, these methods remain highly relevant as modern education increasingly recognises the importance of experiential learning, integration of arts, value education, and learner-centric pedagogy. NEP 2020 also promotes similar approaches by advocating for art-integrated, competency-based, and value-oriented education to nurture responsible, ethical, and creative citizens. Thus, Sankardeva's education system and methods inspire today's educators to blend cultural heritage with innovative pedagogies for holistic development of learners.

Holistic Development: Srimanta Sankardeva's education system was designed to ensure the holistic development of individuals by integrating spiritual, moral, intellectual, artistic, vocational and social learning. His Namgharas and Satras functioned not only as religious centres but also as educational hubs where learners were nurtured through devotional practices, ethical teachings, literature, drama, music, dance, and communal activities. This approach promoted emotional strength, moral character, creativity, cultural pride, and social responsibility. His teachings emphasised inner purity, compassion, discipline, and selfless service, ensuring that education shaped learners into good human beings and responsible members of society. In the present time, this holistic approach remains highly relevant as modern education realises the need to go beyond academic achievement to focus on emotional, social, ethical, and creative development. NEP 2020 also advocates for such holistic education by promoting integration of arts, values, ethics, and life skills with academic learning to develop well-rounded individuals. Thus, Sankardeva's education system serves as an inspiring model for today's educators to foster holistic

development rooted in cultural heritage and moral values while preparing learners for the challenges of the 21st century.

Adult Education : Srimanta Sankardeva's education system was inclusive and community-oriented, extending learning opportunities to people of all ages, including adults. His Namgharas and Satras served as open learning spaces where elders and adults participated in religious discourses, moral teachings, discussions on social issues, and cultural activities like music, drama, and arts, which broadened their knowledge, skills, and perspectives. Through storytelling, group singing (Borgeet), and community dramas (Ankiya Naat), Sankardeva educated adults on ethical living, social responsibilities, and cultural heritage while enhancing their communication, leadership, and organizational skills. This approach empowered adults to lead community initiatives, resolve conflicts peacefully, and live harmoniously. In present times, adult education focuses on literacy, skill development, awareness, and empowerment to improve quality of life and societal development. Sankardeva's education system is highly relevant today as it demonstrates how adult education can be rooted in culture, moral values, and practical knowledge, making learning meaningful and applicable in daily life. His vision aligns with current adult education goals of lifelong learning, social awareness, and active citizenship, as emphasized in NEP 2020, which seeks to promote inclusive, flexible, and community-based adult education programmes for a self-reliant and empowered society.

Conclusion

In Assam, during the period of Sankardeva, education was available to only selected people. Common people were generally illiterate. Sankardeva and his disciples tried on their own way to eliminate the darkness of illiteracy from the masses. Sankardeva's aims of education included moral aim, vocational aim, spiritual aim, aim of universal brotherhood, peace and inclusive society, aim of all round development. To achieve these aims of education Sankardeva and his disciples develop many ways like established Satras and Namgharas, translated many important literatures from

Sanskrit language to Assamese language, composed drama and poems etc. He also emphasized on the enhancement of adult education and vocational education.

Contribution of Sankardeva to literature and language is very important. He (and his disciples) composed many important literary works such as the Kirtana-Ghosa, Bargeets (poems), Ankiya Nats (drama), Bhatima (songs), Translations of important Sanskrit books like Bhagavata Purana, Gita etc. Through literary compositions he propagates the Eka-Sarana-Nama-Dharama for all people of irrespective of caste, creed, class and religion and imparted education to masses. He had also remarkable contribution towards curriculum and method of teaching which are scientific and still use in present education system.

Srimanta Sankardeva's education system can be effectively linked with the objectives of NEP 2020 and other contemporary education policies due to its emphasis on holistic, value-based, and inclusive learning. His system aimed at the all-round development of individuals by integrating moral education, spiritual growth, intellectual development, arts, music, drama, and vocational skills, which resonates with NEP 2020's focus on multidisciplinary and holistic education. Sankardeva's methods of teaching through storytelling, dramatization, music, and practical activities align with NEP 2020's objective of promoting experiential and art-integrated learning to enhance creativity, critical thinking, and conceptual understanding. His education system promoted inclusivity by bringing people of all castes and communities together in Namgharas and Satras, reflecting NEP 2020's goal of equity and accessibility in education for all. Additionally, his emphasis on skill development, self-reliance, and dignity of labour through crafts, arts, and community service parallels NEP 2020's focus on vocational education and life skills from early stages to prepare learners for meaningful livelihoods. Other policies like the National Skill Development Policy and Adult Education initiatives also align with his model, which integrated practical skills, cultural education, and social empowerment. Thus, Sankardeva's education system remains a timeless example for modern education,

demonstrating how cultural heritage, ethics, skills, and holistic development can be integrated to achieve national education objectives for building responsible, skilled, and culturally rooted citizens.

From the above discussion it can be said that Srimanta Sankardeva was not only a great vaishnavite saint, religious guru/leader, philosopher, social reformer but also a great educationist of his time (in fact all time.)

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College Administrators and Faculty Perceptions on Academic Advising at Three Colleges of Education in Ghana

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Abstract

The success of Ghanaian Colleges of Education increasingly depends on student retention and degree completion. Views and Opinions about college administrators' and faculty participation in academic advising are still developing. Despite the paucity of data on the topic, some college administrators, lecturers and tutors were encouraged to provide academic support. It also discusses the strength and challenges of college administrators and faculty perceptions on academic advising, strategies and provides details on the way forward to address them. This study examined college administrators' and faculty perceptions on academic advising at Ghana's three colleges of education. The research methodology used in this comparative study was constructionist epistemology. College administrators find it difficult to assist students because of their schedules and workloads; as a result, they recommend employing professionals to perform the task. The second finding was that accessibility and services were crucial to academic advising. Finally, access to student data and technology posed challenges to faculty.

Keywords- *Colleges, Administrators, Academic, Advising, Ghana.*

Introduction

Years ago, some colleges of education and universities in Ghana boasted better retention of (first-year students returning to the same institution for their second year degrees, students continuous enrolment from semester to semester), and degree completion rates varies greater from time to time by public colleges (Astin, 1997). Success was partly due to selective admissions standards, enrolling primarily residential students or regular students who were not required to work to support themselves or their families, and smaller environments that promoted institutional

connections and involvement (Freeman et al., 2007). However, as the growing nature of the economy increases with large students' populations, during the admission periods, enrolments at many public and private institutions continues to emerge. The decrease in attendance at private colleges was possibly as a result of student financial tussles that contributed to increased enrolment in public colleges in Ghana because they were often perceived as being more affordable and reliable than private colleges/universities (Zumeta, 2010). Private institutions that are affected includes religious ones that focus on changing or making a distinctive difference in people's lives by offering deep, spiritual meanings (Woodrow, 2006), that also wanted to remain accessible and affordable for students who desired a religious education. In other words, college administrators are persons or individuals who manage the operations of a college or university, including academics, student services, and faculty research. They also help students to navigate the university's services in areas such as students' records, grade issues, transcripts, accommodation issues and many more.

Many others building on their seminal works, have maintained that the best way for students to engage in an institution is through relationships with college administrators (Tinto, 2001). Relationships are easily fostered at small institutions, as there are often more opportunities for students to interact with their tutors inside and outside of the classroom due to the size of these institutions (Kuh & Hu, 2001). Additionally, many colleges and universities with enrolments below 1,500 students utilize a tutor/lecturer advisory model system, in which faculties in academic department's advice students in their majors programs regarding which courses to take, as well as giving guidance and counselling towards career prospects and internship options to consider after leaving the college. Also, college administrators plays a very essential role to students by giving them some key academic advises in regards to how they should go by their course work and lectures either in a form of orientations or through seminars and workshops for students.

Tutor/Lecturer advising models system is likely to enhance student experiences at many public colleges of education in Ghana with the sense that, students get enough time to interact with their tutors as a result in student to teacher ratio, relatively low including private ones that struggle with enrolment of students due to financial

difficulties which may further reduce the likelihood of student retention for a period of time that would range within the four-year degree completion (Campbell & Nutt, 2008). With this, it simply implies that, public colleges of education has the capacity to take more students since is government funded through subventions as compared to private colleges of education and hence, teacher to student ratio increases as a result of student retention in progression.

Literature review

The various models and structures of academic advising that currently exist indicates that nearly all full-time colleges of education and university administrators are expected to advise students in some capacity in respect to their works. The expectations of college administrators' who serve as advisors at some of these institutions, however, are mostly not enough. In regards to faculty-student mentoring relationships at some colleges, (Noble, 2018) explained: I and my colleagues at various private colleges regularly interact with our students outside the class in a number of settings: trips to academic conferences, excursion trips, study-abroad trips, dinners on campus, dinners in the professors' homes, games, book club, social media interactions, sports, bible studies and many others. Obviously not all students or professors may be involved in the campus community trips, but a few may wish to do so. Nationally, faculty advisors have an average of 26 advisees and spend about 11% of their time meeting with students about their academic issues (Gordon et al., 2011). These faculty advisors are perceived as effective if they accomplish the following goals: assist students in self-understanding and acceptance, especially as it relates to career goals and life decisions; assist students in developing an appropriate educational plan and aid their decision-making abilities; and provide specifics about policies and support programs and resources. Yet, it is important to recognize that the abilities and skills associated with effective academic advising do not always come naturally to tutor/ lecturer advisors, and administrators, but most often are not trained to be effective advisors (Myers & Dyer, 2005). It also means that, some college administrators who are with the expertise and skills in managing students relate problems on various campuses, can succeed effectively when there is a need for counselling session on

academic advising to be carried out to enhance their academic skills using their professional abilities, therefore there is a need for these administrators to have a professional background in order to support this task.

The skills that are most important for effective advisors to master include listening, counselling, referring, challenging, and supporting. (Gordon et al., 2011) recommended that specific expectations of advisors begin with the mission of the institution, which influences the goals of specific academic advising programs and faculty advisors. Significant research shows that effective academic advising is often not rewarded at colleges and universities (Swanson, 2006). Rather, research is the most rewarded activity in rank and tenure considerations and processes, particularly at large public four-year institutions (Tien & Blackburn, 1996). Although rank and tenure rewards possibly motivate faculty to be active in scholarly research and publications, wondered if intrinsic motivation (enjoyment and interest in research) could result in greater research productivity than extrinsic motivation (faculty promotion, money) alone. The same possibilities have been stated about academic advising over decades of research. Even if an institution does not reward faculty for fulfilling their academic advising expectations, the tutors/lecturers who enjoy advising students are more likely to do it and do it well without any motivations. The same may be true for the additional engagement of faculty at other private colleges and universities, as explained by (Noble, 2018), a prominent voice in Christian Higher Education. Tutors/Lecturers who enjoy time with students both inside and outside the classroom and make additional opportunities to interact with students in both spaces when they are motivated through some kind of empowerment towards their professional development, such as grants, sponsorships, that is to say, through intrinsic motivation ways always wish to support students' academic advising in most cases.

Although tutors/lecturers are experts in their academic fields, many start the teaching profession with few skills or training in academic advising (Gordon et al., 2011). Also, college administrators, have their skills in handling administrative duties by ensuring that, the skills they acquired has a requisite application to academic skills that can be used in managing students' academic issues that needs the attention of

management. Therefore, the colleges and universities where they are employed do little to meet their professional development needs in this area (Myers & Dyer, 2005). Consequently, tutor/lecturer advisors must make their own efforts to improve their academic advising abilities. (Trigwell, 2011) stated that doing so requires faculty to first understand their strengths and compensate for their weaknesses, while acquiring a positive attitude toward their academic advising processes and responsibilities. As expected, tutor/lecturer attitudes should be an integral part of this equation to enhance students' academic achievements and the institutions should enhance upon tutors/lecturers professional development towards academic advising for those who wish to take up these roles and responsibilities attached to their areas in the academia. This can be done, by supporting or encouraging tutors/lecturers to belong to some professional bodies that empower students through academic counselling to be trained and have the pre-requisite knowledge and skills in order to assist students aside their teaching, learning and research.

'When researching faculty attitudes toward academic advising, (Allen & Smith, 2008) identified 12 functions of academic advising and assessed faculty members' views on how important each of those functions were, how responsible they felt for accomplishing each of those functions, and how well they believed that they satisfied each of the functions as a faculty advisor. Perhaps not amazingly, the tutor/lecturer respondents believed that all 12 functions were important, including the lowest rated function, which was helping students choose extra-curricular activities. Additionally, the researcher identified significant contrast between how important tutors/lecturers viewed some functions and how responsible they felt they were for them. Remarkably, providing accurate information about degree requirements and explaining how academic policies and procedures worked ranked as the two most important functions, but tutor/lecturer advisors did not believe that they were primarily responsible for either of them. The functions that tutor/lecturer advisors do see as their responsibilities were more related to connecting to the coursework in their major fields (and not necessarily their general education courses), as well as being counselled into internships, graduate schools, and specific career paths. These findings, then, highlight the conclusion that college administrator advisors

need thoroughly and regular training, along with reminders of advising functions, or should tasked these academic advising responsibilities to professionals who have the skills to manage students' academic issues across the various colleges.

Three areas in which college administrators need assistance in developing their academic advising skills include career advising, curriculum and/or academic programmes advising, and developmental training (Myers & Dyer, 2005). However, only limited research has examined faculty attitudes toward academic advising, how they prepare for such responsibilities and roles, or how they execute these tasks when advising students, leaving the area of college administrators. One of the few exceptions is a study by (Myers & Dyer, 2005), who attempted "to determine the attitudes, needs, and self-perceived level of competence in advising by faculty of agricultural and land grant institutions" (p.38). Their research revealed that faculty's advice mostly the undergraduate students and that their advising sessions with undergraduate students are longer the same as their advising sessions with graduate students. Out Of the faculty participants in the study, 91% believed that academic advising should be part of rank and tenure decisions and count toward their teaching loads and promotion. When asked if such practices already existed at their institutions, 56.4% of faculty reported that academic advising was part of rank and tenure considerations, and 41.3% of faculty said that their teaching loads does not allowed enough time to advise students. To this effect, it has become necessary to conduct this research to know the perceptions towards academic advising by college administrators to enhance and to support students' needs on campus for their academic achievement. From this study, it can be inferred that, academic advising should be made independent from teaching and learning in order to create better avenue for students to interact with professionals who can handle key areas by providing psychological, social and emotional well-being needs such as; counselling and placement needs, programme guidance needs, to students at all times, whiles on campus, since these students majority of them are above 18 years of age.

Moreover, private institutions in the United States, including those affiliated with the Christian denominations, full-time faculty often assume the role of academic advisor (Noble, 2018). Academic advising is not prioritized by administrators as a

whole, but rather by those with knowledge of academic skills in handling students' issues professionally, because the job descriptions of college administrators in Ghanaian educational institutions primarily involve administrative and supervision responsibilities in addition to other duties rather than academic. Effective advising is essential to improve students' retention rate, persistence, and degree completion (Allen & Smith, 2008), and the use of faculty advisors is unlikely to change at small colleges. However, the effectiveness of tutor/lecturer advisors at colleges of education and universities may be improved if perceptions of the advantages and difficulties of such advising are better understood and well outlined in the job description of their roles as tutors/lecturers.

Managing academic advising to improve academic work is largely the responsibility of college administrators, but tutors/lecturers can only support the task, in this way, it helps the students stay update on the information they need to accomplish their academic goals and develop capabilities as leaders in their future endeavors. Also, college administrators' roles may differ based on their job descriptions but in somehow related to the capacity in which they may find themselves, hence there is a need to have a professional staff who has the knowledge and experience to carry out such task on academic advising in various institutions in Ghana.

Methods

The study was guided by this research question: "What are college administrators' perceptions of the strengths and challenges of current systems of academic advising at these three Teacher Colleges in Ghana?" The design of the study was rooted in the epistemology of constructionism, in which meaning is not found, but constructed by the meaning-maker (Crotty, 1998). That is, there was no one objective truth to address this research question; rather, the people who experienced a certain phenomenon created their own meaning or reality about that phenomenon. Such different truths can only be explored and understood through qualitative research, which uses data collection and analysis methods to highlight individual experiences and perspectives, not to produce generalizations. This type of research is derived from the theoretical perspective of constructivism, which focuses "exclusively on 'the

meaning making activity of the individual mind” (Crotty, 1998). This method was adopted to solicit experiences and opinions through interviews from participants who had rich information to assist for investigation. In this case, the theoretical perspective of constructivism identified the culture-sharing group of college administrators as advisors at some, teacher training, colleges of education in Ghana on the study of their perceptions of academic advising expectations and responsibilities.

Research Design

The research strategy for this study was a case study. According to (Yin, 2009), “a case study is an empirical inquiry that investigates a contemporary phenomenon in-depth and within its real-life context, especially when the boundaries between phenomenon and context are not clearly evident” (p. 18). Thus, other defining characteristics of a case study is that it “explores in-depth, program, event, activity, process, and one or more individuals” (Creswell et al., 2007), is bound by a set period of time, and strives to result in a well-rounded understanding of the case being studied (Patton, 2014). Although there were no limitations of data collection for this case study, data were collected from multiple sources to strengthen the description and understanding of the arguments. Thus, the case study could also be described as particularistic, meaning that it focused “on a particular situation, event, program, or phenomenon” (Merriam, 2001). The study was a comparative case study, in which multiple cases were researched to understand one culture and issue (Creswell, 2009), hence allowed its design to fit within the existing definitions of case studies.

Research Location

Data collection for this study took place at the three Teacher Training Colleges located in different districts within the Volta region of Ghana, West Africa. Each institution/college granted an approval for entry from the College Principal for data collection to take place on campus. The pseudonyms of these institutions were Evangelical Presbyterian College of Education, Amedzofe (AMECO), Peki College of Education (PKCE-GOVCO), and Akatsi College of Education (AKATSICO). Although the three campuses shared certain characteristics in common, they differ in

other ways in terms of infrastructure. To provide an idea of an ongoing reference, a summary of descriptors of study locations were made available in Table 1.

Table - 1

Descriptors of the study Location

College /Institution	Location (Population)	Size (Student Enrolment)
Evangelical Presbyterian College of Education (AMECO)	Amedzofe, Ho West District	1,096
Peki College of Education (PKCE-GOVCO)	Peki, South Dayi District	1,230
Akatsi College of Education (AKATSICO)	Akatsi, South District	700 / 1000

Similarities

The main characteristics that **AMECO**, **PKCE-GOVCO**, and **AKATSICO** shared were similarities of location, and student enrolment size. The Colleges of Education are positioned in the same region but close districts within the Volta Region of Ghana and face vicious competition with other private and public ones in the other regions, and now, it has changed from two-year programme to four-year degree programme institutions. Because they all have same objectives and visions but not similar to private ones, there are similar influences on the way the administrators and tutors/lecturers advise and interact with students, since more emphasis is placed on “teaching and learning” of the students. Also, vital to focus on the case study is that the colleges were similar in size; AMECO, PKCE-GOVCO, and AKATSICO enrolments vary from 1,000 to 1,200 with undergraduate students for varied educational degrees both in Primary and JHS education programmes in the various colleges. All the three colleges expected full-time faculty to serve as academic advisors to students and also provide key administrative guidance towards students’ academic path on various campuses but it has become challenging to the fact that, they enjoyed teaching and supervising their students more than giving them academic advise due to time constraints and the heavy workloads on them with project supervisions.

Differences

The main distinct features among these colleges is that they are affiliated to different Public and Private Universities in Ghana that met the standard of Ghana Tertiary Education Commission (GTEC) criteria as established by law and award degree certificates to students after the completion of their various degree, certificates and diploma programmes in the colleges of Education in Ghana. However, the specific affiliations are identified in order to protect the ethical principles of the colleges involved in the study.

Research Participants

One college administrator from each college of education were recruited together with two full-time tutors/lecturers who were selected to participate in the interviews, document collection, and observations at each college for the study. The selection process employed was purposeful sampling; that is, participants were chosen because they could provide rich information about a phenomenon being studied (Patton, 2014). In compliance with the colleges' ethical rules and regulations, each tutor/lecturer advisor was asked to sign a consent form to participate in the study. The process of selecting participants included discussions with professional contacts at each college to determine who was eligible for the study, how long they worked at the college, the subject(s) they taught, and at what level, and the number of students they supervised. Efforts were made to select academic advisors who taught in different academic areas and have experience in years of service. Consequently, college administrators who were also selected from diverse administration backgrounds were in relation to their academic knowledge in the field of administration and experience in the number of years in that position. Pseudonyms were used by the colleges of education, as research participants were identified with affiliation as "tutor/lecturer 1, and 2" with their academic fields as "Primary Education and JHS Education as department/division" whereas; college administrators remain as "Administration". These descriptors were used to identify the research participants from the various colleges of education as indicated in Table 2.

Table - 2
Descriptors of research participants

Pseudonyms	Colleges / Participants	Academic Field	Experience (Years)	Advising (Years)
AMECO	Evangelical Presbyterian College of Education			
	1. College Administrator	Administration	12	10
	2. Tutor /Lecturer 1	Primary Educ.	10	7
	3. Tutor /Lecturer 2	JHS Education	14	12
PKCE-GOVCO	Peki College of Education			
	1. College Administrator	Administration	8	6
	2. Tutor /Lecturer 1	Primary Educ.	15	14
	3. Tutor /Lecturer 2	JHS Education	18	18
AKATSICO	Akatsi College of Education			
	1. College Administrator	Administration	5	5
	2. Tutor /Lecturer 1	Primary Educ.	10	9
	3. Tutor /Lecturer 2	JHS Education	12	11

The academic fields provided a more comprehensive view of faculty-provided advising at their colleges and a deeper understanding of answering the study's research question because these fields necessitate different career paths and course counselling information and will help the students meet their desired interest in the chosen field.

Data collection and analysis

The data for this study were extracted from interviews, collected documents, and observations with each of the faculty participants and the college administrators

towards their perspectives on the topic. The interviews lasted from 20 minutes to 40 minutes in length, and provided valuable insights to participants' behaviors, feelings, intentions, and thoughts. After these one-on-one meetings, each participant also submitted documents that they referenced in the interview to support their opinions. The interview protocol was designed to identify what documents the participants chose to mention on their own, with those materials subsequently gathered. By allowing information about these documents to emerge during the interview responses without prompting, insight was gained regarding which resources were most typically used during the advising process. Four-year degree and course sequencing plans, an academic advising manual, and a written proposal on faculty advising that was distributed to an academic curriculum approval board were among the materials gathered. Observation of advising sessions between the faculty and administrator participants and their advisees were carried out after the interviews and document collections. Student advisors also completed consent forms to enable their advising sessions to be seen in accordance with GTEC rules and regulations governing data collection. One session per faculty advisor participant was observed; whereas another session with administrator participant were also observed at each college, however, no recording was made from the sessions, instead, the researcher took field notes of each interview, which were important as they revealed their academic advising styles by faculty and administrator participants and the interactions they had with their advisees.

Qualitative data analysis includes a number of different processes. The one used for this study involved organizing data through field notes, coding and interpreting data, displaying and discussing findings (Creswell, 2009). After each interview was completed, the field notes taken were read thoroughly to ensure accuracy of the data extracted with assigned codes from the interviews with the participants. Such organizational processes and initial analyses continued as documents were collected and observations took place. Throughout the observations, the researcher continued and took thorough field notes of the interactions between the participants and some students, as well as the details of their discussion. This can be asserted by (Lincoln & Guba, 1985) "Peer debriefing or peer scrutiny are solid communication habits that create trust. Using another researcher to read and react to field notes, with their embedded researcher interpretations, is a confirmation that creates a tacit reality for the researcher". The field notes were transcribed within 24 hours after the observations to ensure the data were clear and timely. The transcripts were read and re-read prior to

the coding assigned to each of them with memos. Data was uploaded into MAXQDA, a qualitative data software that generated themes from the interviewed field notes gathered by the researcher and was used for the analysis. After the organization of the field notes by the researcher using the software, they were sorted chronologically to reflect each piece of data that was collected. Qualitative data analysis is rarely linear. In this study, data were coded as they were collected. This aspect of inductive coding occurred in different phases, beginning with first phase coding. From the themes that emanated from the software, that identified the first participant as faculty was of the view that “academic advising should be a sole responsibility of the college administrator since it deals mostly with students’ academic progression in the college”. Also, from the interviewed field note generated as a theme, was again identified as a college administrator who is of the view that, “academic advising forms a crucial aspect of students engagement with their lecturers, hence, lecturers should be given the role to play in academic advising to students to support and enhanced their leaning needs in the college”. Therefore, in the first phase of the analysis from the themes identified, it was in line with the view of (Saldana, 2014) that inductive coding was vital in the data analysis process, as a theoretical lens was not applied to the data; rather, it was beneficial to see what themes emerged from the data on their own.

In the second phase of the coding, the researcher with another college administrator was observed that “due to the heavy workload of administrative task, academic advising to students should be made as a separated task to be handled by a well-trained professional within the college to solely handle the works of academic advising to students in order to effectively meet the needs of students progress” although there were other themes that emerged, the most prevalence ones were taking in support of this study to reflect the primary findings. When the themes emerged, they were captured with memos that were used to depict interview transcripts. At this point, analytical memos of occurrences in the data were used “to document and reflect on the coding processes and code choices, how the process of inquiries is taking shape, and the emergent patterns, categories and subcategories, themes, and concepts in the data” (Saldana, 2014).

Results

Although (Jnanathapaswi, 2021) defined a theme as “an outcome of coding, categorization, or analytical reflection” (p.14), he simply described findings as “buried treasure” (p.259) within the themes that emerged from the data in the study. A

systematic analysis of the themes that emerged from the interview data were assigned memos with indicated colors to differentiate each one of them and were used to give a reflective picture of the opinions and views of each selected faculty and college administrators as a participant in the study. The researcher, after the analysis of the themes that emerged familiarized himself with the data and was of the view that there is a need for a support system that should be adopted to solve academic advising as challenges faced by the three colleges of education in a sense that, there should be a provision of a qualified and professional advisors that should perform the task of academic advising and to address students' needs in the colleges of education respectively. Therefore, the findings were to address the research question for this study that states that: "What are college administrators' perceptions of the strengths and challenges of current systems of faculty-provided academic advising at the three Colleges in Ghana?" Based on the finding from the interview themes, it was found out that, the strength of academic advising can only be ensured if its operations is completely separated from the roles played by college administrators to give a strong service provision to students in the colleges, hence there is a need to recruit a professional personnel to undertake these tasks. Also, on the side of the faculty, as academic advising help to know the students more and better and to understand their academic needs, it was found out that, the workload on faculty with supervision roles and teaching roles, adding academic advising makes it more tiring, therefore there is a need for motivation for faculty who wish to carry out academic advising to students irrespective of their workloads.

Comparative case study findings

The data, themes, and commonalities at the three (3) colleges of education resulted in two main converging findings for the comparative case study. First finding related to perceptions of the strengths and challenges of faculty provided academic advising at the three Colleges in Ghana. The second finding focused on college administrator advisors perceptions of the strength and challenges on academic advising services at the three Colleges of Ghana. These two findings were discussed below.

a. Perception on the strengths and challenges of tutor/lecturer (Faculty) advisors knowing their students and enjoyed interacting with them always through teaching and Learning, research supervision at the three Colleges in Ghana

Across the three colleges of education in Ghana, where the study was carried out, the faculty advisors indicated that they enjoyed spending time with their students both in and out of the classrooms. Also, working at some colleges of education in Ghana that are primarily oriented toward teaching and learning, research supervision allows most faculty to know their students individually as well as also support their academic and career achievements through academic advising purposes. The faculty also attributed the encouragement and positive environments to the mission and visions of the colleges. It suggested that when faculty are concentrating on teaching, learning and research rather than advising, it is simple for them to get to know their students and for students to get to know their lecturers; hence smaller class sizes, allotment of students for supervision works were also seen as a benefit. Additionally, faculty advisor participants connected the college's goal, school culture, and surroundings to staff members who prioritize students' academic needs. Nearly every participant mentioned how their Christian faith has an influence in shaping the purpose of their interactions with students. Therefore, it was clear from the study that the faculty advisors at these three (3) Ghanaian colleges of education viewed these interpersonal contacts as a strength of the tutor/lecturer advisor model. Notwithstanding the strength alone, it was also realized that the faculty advisors were faced with challenges of meeting with the students especially with female students, who were allotted to male faculty for supervision and vice versa. This was a crucial challenge most female students who needed academic advice from them faced on campus.

b. Perception on the strength and challenges of college administrator advisors due to their busy administrative schedules and did not feel like they had enough time to thoroughly advise students on their academic advising services at the three (3) Colleges in Ghana

Although the nature of administrative task being performed by college administrators in these three (3) colleges of education in Ghana was huge, the participants had many tasks to accomplish beyond academic advising. The combination of such tasks varied, but seemed to result in less time for meaningful, personal, or productive academic advising sessions with students. Also, comparing the first findings as a strength of tutor/lecturer advisors role, it can be seen that tutor/lecturer advisors were expected to teach classes and grade assignments, hence they held office hours to help their students with coursework and other questions and concerns. Whereas with the college administrators, perform various administrative duties most often, attend to board meetings and take necessary minutes, writing of

letters, memos, dispatch correspondence and ensure records are kept administratively for easy retrieval at all times. This makes it more challenging for administrators to have enough time to provide academic advising services to students, mostly within their capacity as college administrators. Some of the college administrators who were participants also serve on committees and conducted occasional research to enhance their professional development in administration. In fact, at the time of the case study, it was found out that two of the college administrators from Peki and Akatsi College of Education were in the process of completing their Ph.D. degrees. Consequently, almost all of them expressed that they felt stressed to meet with their advisees as often or for as long as they desired, particularly if they had heavy work schedules to attend to. Despite the participants' claims that their administrative workloads were somewhat lightened in order to provide academic advising to students. Every administrator interviewed said that they were not compensated or motivated for their efforts, which made them occasionally hesitant to help students with academic advising, since it is not their core mandate but rather optional. This study aligns with the pattern found in the literature that was reviewed (Winniford et al., 1997)

Findings from the three (3) Colleges of Education in Ghana

Apart from the comparative case study analysis indicated above, the data also revealed specific institutional findings. The sections that follow describe unique themes for each of the three case study locations.

Evangelical Presbyterian College of Education (AMECO)

A theme emerged at this college which indicates that; the tutors/lecturers saw the functions and the processes of academic advising as different from teaching and other related academic services such as students' enrolment, course counselling, etc.

At AMECO, the frustration that was expressed by the tutors/lecturers as advisors related to their perception that most of their workload was on advising that related to enrolment instead of teaching. For example, a tutor/lecturer who handles primary education courses specifically emphasized that academic advising and enrolment are not the same, therefore there is a need to separate them, thus; he believed that enrolment should be the students' responsibility with the assistance from the college administrator or registrar of the institution, hence it should be channeled towards the office of the principal of the college, if necessary. In that development, the college administrator or principal of the college should provide students with semester

plans on how they can go about with information relating to their academic needs through the guidance of the registrar's office. Also, another tutor/lecturer from the JHS education department is of the view that since it is an administrative task to be performed, the office of the college registrar, should create an office space and recruit a qualified permanent staff who can handle cases of students' affairs needs while the tutors/lecturers served as coursework/project work counsellors and a mentor to the students. Similarly, from the observation, it was realized that, both tutors/lecturers from both Primary and JHS education department of the college were of the view that, academic advising should solely be the responsibility of the college administrators or with the office of the registrar and not the responsibility of the tutors/lecturers. Therefore, there should be clear boundaries between academic advising and that of providing academic guidance to students as academic counsellors or mentors. Also, it was suggested that a different academic advising model should be adopted in order to give a clear difference between academic advising and course enrolment in the college.

Peki College of Education (PKCE-GOVCO)

At PKCE-GOVCO, this two distinctive themes emerged: (1) Accessibility and customer service were vital to academic advising, as personal interactions were believed to contribute to student success; (2) inadequate information at the disposal of tutors/lecturers to guide students towards academic advising.

Accessibility and a customer service orientation were evident in the exact words used by both tutor/lecturer advisors as participant at PKCE-GOVCO, words that were repeated in the academic advising manual and at an observed academic advising session: having an "open door policy." Tutor/lecturer (JHS education, division) used a language to address the phenomenon of advising students who were not her official advisees. She said that students at PKCE-GOVCO knew they could walk into any advisor's office to receive help but it sometimes become difficult for them due to the fact that, most of the tutors/lecturers have busy schedules, either teaching or preparing their lecture presentation notes and so forth. Moreover, a lecturer/tutor from (Primary education, division) stated that although, his work is loaded, he can still make time to assist students with academic advising towards their academic achievements, hence he is ready to support the college administrator to provide that support to students as and when needed. He also indicated that he was willing to talk to these students, by organizing a zoom meeting at a scheduled time to engage newly admitted students

with the academic advising services they may need. Similarly, as he said, advising his students throughout every semester and the academic year. With his experience, he saw accessibility as an important part of customer service for students, stating that, it gives the students the chance to understand what they really need especially when it comes to academic advising on their course of studies as students affairs in the college, he indicated that he gave his phone number to students and inform them to call or text him any time they had a question concerning their studies. One of the tutors/lecturers also said from his perspective that, his students were paying for his services, and therefore willing to receive them by providing them with academic advising services.

Although, the college administrator plays the role of ensuring that students had their orientation before the beginning of the academic work, students seem not to be satisfied with that but still need academic advising toward the progress of their academic work whiles on campus and outside campus. Therefore, it has become the continuous responsibility of the administrators to ensure its effectiveness.

In view of the above, another point which was raised by tutors/lecturers were as a result of inadequate information at the disposal of tutors/lecturers to guide students towards academic advising. Students may have to "run around" to gather information before they can finish their enrolment procedures since lecturers/tutors are unable to help them because they lack access to information and are not aware of certain restrictions, hence makes it difficult for students to attend to academic service orientations, which faculty or an academic advisor may occasionally do in brief to assist students. To sum it up, these faculty advisors were supposed to offer students full-service advice in some cases, but the process is hindered by the restricted access to data to be used.

Akatsi College of Education (AKATSICO)

One recurring theme in the interviews with AKATSICO tutor/lecturer advisors was of the view that the faculty's capacity to provide students with suitable advice was inhibited by time and technological challenges.

The college's transition from a manual enrolment system that had been in place for a number of years to a new automated system that processed student records using software is probably what caused this theme to emerge. Although the department permitted any faculty member to enroll students, a JHS division tutor/lecturer explained that only the designated advisor could view or modify the student's

information in the college's recently automated system; as a result, other tutors/lecturers were not granted access to help students using the same system due to issues of confidentiality.

Also, the college administrator is of the view that the newly automated system of enrolment would flag-out possible challenges that existed and pave way for smooth operations on enrolment procedures. Another tutor/lecturer from the primary division of the college described the problems associated with the old system and said that enrolment of students is a huge challenge faced by the college, but as it stands now, the automated system would go a long way to address these challenges and also urge the office of the college registrar, to pilot tutors/lecturers who can be of assistance to help provide academic advising to students by giving them access to students records to enhance effectiveness using the newly adopted automated system.

It was evident that the participants at AKATSICO could benefit from thorough training about the new system being implemented to enhance efficiency and hence increase students' enrolment, as well as provide faculty with the necessary technological support to assist students' academic advising, even though the tutors/lecturers were not quite as concerned with the enrolment technology as indicated by the college administrator.

Implications for practice

The results from the individual colleges and comparative case studies have many implications and suggestions for the way faculty advising should be carried out at Ghana's three colleges of education. In order to promote comprehensive and high-quality advising consultations between faculty and their students, recommendations for academic advising models were made by the faculty advisors.

One suggestion was for academic advising expectations and responsibilities to be clearly communicated to faculty advisors. If tutor/lecturer advisors were aware of their roles as academic advisors and received appropriate training of their responsibilities, they would be more likely to succeed in these areas. Similarly, intentional and meaningful rewards should be given to tutor/lecturer advisors who excel at academic advising. The form of such compensation would likely vary from one institution to another, depending on their qualifications and other reward structures, to encourage faculty advisors to invest in faculty- through academic advising models to help support the college administrators. Another suggestion to assist with faculty advising loads is that of a central advising office or staff to meet

with first and second-year students to help them enroll in their respective programmes of study in the college. Once students advance to their third and fourth academic year, they should be assigned to a faculty advisor in their major fields. Such models would allow tutor/lecturer advisors to have some relief from their academic advising loads and encourage faculty advising sessions to focus on academic and career objectives and mentoring rather than just course sequencing and enrolment (Allen & Smith, 2008).

The three colleges in this comparative case study may be limited in funds or other resources, which make it difficult to establish an academic advising office or staff responsible for first- and second-year students. In such situations, it may be possible to use existing academic support programs, such as first-year experience programs, a general education director, the Registrar's Office, or a student's counselling and placement center. These areas could act as an enrolment locations for these students of the college. Firstly, it allows first- and second-year students to connect with full-time faculty in their intended area of study, as the literature on retention and persistence repeatedly emphasizes (Campbell & Nutt, 2008). Secondly, it provides opportunities for academic major and career exploration as well as introducing a discipline to students early in their college careers, which helps them to determine whether or not the field is right for them. Furthermore, the college administrator at Akatsi College of education indicated in her submission that, the problems with faculty being engaged in academic advising is as a result of the overburden task on them, hence there is a need to engage faculty for their assistance. The management of the college should arrange appropriate technological training for faculty advisors. The college need to employ competent employees in information technology and make efforts to create and purchase technological systems that should align with institutional needs. The same should be provided for people who work in offices that handle sensitive information about students. As evidenced in these findings from the study, faculty and staff at the colleges may need more training to understand the newly automated system and to be able to use them effectively.

A centralized advising system, such as physical or virtual one, can be an alternative advising model. These programs facilitate the completion of many academic assignments in a single location, either online or in a physical building. This enhances the experience for both existing and potential students as well as their parents. While setting up these places, time, money, and organizational restructuring is an issue, but virtual centers are far less expensive and simpler to set up. Intentional

and well-communicated designs and goals for a central advising office space for a staff could be a key element of a successful solution to a number of the issues brought up by survey participants.

Limitations of the study

The study which was restricted to Ghana's three educational institutions, sought to understand how college administrators and faculty felt about the academic advising systems that were in place at these three colleges of education. The results were exclusive to the colleges that employed a faculty advising approach to assist the office of the college registrar because the colleges visited in this case study lacked professional advising staff. The results were not meant to be applied to other people or situations outside the ones that were examined, as a case with all other qualitative research

Future research

Based on the study findings, more research should be conducted on the roles and responsibilities of tutors and lecturers. This is because, even though they may differ from college to college, their roles and responsibilities should be important for all full-time faculty members. This will increase their effectiveness and encourage a high degree of improvement in the way academic activities are managed across different colleges. It also suggested that there should to be a positive correlation between academic advising expectations and institutional cultures and faculty members feeling overburdened and overworked, which would be interesting as a follow-up study.

Also, to examine potential changes to faculty duties to free up more time for high-quality academic advising connections with students in schools that use faculty advisor models. Some of the faculty in the study experienced worry and an increased burden as a result of these changes, which could be made in the training or use of technology systems. Furthermore, future research should also investigate the use of qualified administrators with relevant experience and backgrounds to manage academic advising services in order to ensure quality assurance services for students in the Ghanaian institutions.

Conclusion

In Ghana's three colleges of education, the work of college administrators is obviously more demanding than that of lecturers at the colleges where they were

employed. However, the problem was that because of the administrator's heavy workloads, they transferred the burden to the lecturers or tutors, who were unmotivated and thus considered to be overburdened with their responsibilities of teaching and supervision of projects. This study assessed academic advising, one of the duties of faculty that should be voluntary but has been forced upon them. It also highlighted the necessity of regular and comprehensive training in addition to their regular teaching and project supervision.

The equal concern for each other is a key component of these colleges to integrate campus- wide efforts to counsel students and help them graduate. Tutors or lecturers from various academic fields are therefore required to assist the college administrator in providing students with academic advice services in an efficient manner, thereby promoting the overall growth and development of the college.

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Historical Development of Educational Guidance and Counselling Services in India: A Policy Perspective Aligned with NEP 2020

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Abstract

Guidance and Counselling (G&C) have emerged as essential components of modern education, with global models offering valuable frameworks that emphasize academic, socio-emotional, and vocational development. This paper examines the evolution of G&C starting from international perspectives, transitioning to the Indian context, and finally exploring the future directions outlined by the National Education Policy (NEP) 2020. The historical trajectory of G&C in India is traced across four key phases: foundation, policy formalization, implementation, and transformation. From the ancient Gurukul system to the pioneering counselling program at the University of Calcutta in 1954 and the influential recommendations of the Kothari Commission, India's guidance services have steadily progressed toward inclusivity and career preparedness. The paper also highlights recent innovations like Delhi's Science of Living framework, which offers a more holistic approach to student well-being by integrating emotional, mental, and digital wellness. The NEP 2020 further strengthens the G&C landscape by promoting structured career guidance, vocational education linkages from school to higher education, and socio-emotional learning, aligning with both national priorities and global best practices to foster holistic student development.

Keywords- *Guidance and Counselling, Socio-Emotional Development, National Education Policy 2020, Career Guidance, Indian Education System, Holistic Development, Vocational Education*

Introduction

Globally, the importance of Guidance and Counselling (G&C) has gained recognition as an essential component of education. Countries like the USA, UK, Singapore, and Australia have well-structured school counselling frameworks that not only focus on academic achievements but also on the social, emotional, and vocational development of students. These international models have demonstrated how systematic guidance services can shape the life skills and career readiness of young learners.

An essential aspect of the evolving Guidance and Counselling (G&C) framework is the seamless linkage between vocational education at the school level and higher education pathways. Globally and within India, there is growing recognition of the need to equip students with practical, employable skills early in their academic journey, ensuring smooth transitions into higher education and the workforce. The National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 emphasizes the integration of vocational training within school curricula and provides students with flexible opportunities to explore skill-based education that can be pursued further at higher levels. This structure connection between school and higher education aims to promote career readiness, lifelong learning, and a more competent workforce, which are crucial objectives of the current educational reforms.

Children are not only the future of the nation—they are its current assets. In a developing country like India, every child must be viewed as a builder of the national fabric. As per the UNESCO Institute for Statistics (2024), India has over 250 million students enrolled in schools, making it home to the world's largest school-age population. The enormity of this demographic reinforces the importance of embedding structured guidance and counselling services within educational institutions. Adolescents in particular face complex academic, psychological, and career-related pressures, and school-based G&C is essential in equipping them to navigate these challenges.

If we look at the international scenario, in Singapore the guidance system is an integral part of schooling, where counsellors work closely with students on career awareness and emotional support. Australia's National Career Education Strategy focuses on students' transitions from school to higher education or the workforce, ensuring every child is equipped with the knowledge, skills, and resilience to thrive. Similarly, the United States follows the American School Counselor Association (ASCA) model that addresses students' academic, career, and socio-emotional needs in a comprehensive way.

While in the Indian context, in contrast, the guidance services in India, though evolving, still face several challenges. School counselling is not yet fully institutionalized and lacks trained professionals, consistent monitoring frameworks, and a holistic delivery approach. However, progressive initiatives like Delhi's Happiness Curriculum and its recent Science of Living framework have added a new dimension to emotional and life skills education.

The Science of Living is considered a more holistic upgrade to the Happiness

Curriculum. According to Shruti Bansal (2025), this approach is designed to address real challenges students face today, especially in our hyper-digital world. It equips them with emotional, mental, and digital wellness tools essential for modern life (India Today, 2025).

National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 and Future Directions The NEP 2020 marks a transformative shift in the Indian education system by formally integrating Guidance and Counselling into school curricula. It emphasizes providing vocational exposure from an early age, ensuring that students develop practical skills aligned with their interests and societal needs.

NEP 2020 encourages multidisciplinary education, focusing on flexibility and the removal of rigid boundaries between academic and vocational streams. It proposes establishing career guidance cells in schools and higher education institutions to support students in making informed career choices.

Importantly, the policy outlines the vertical and horizontal linkages between vocational education at school and higher education levels. This includes skill development programs, internships, and academic credits that are transferable across disciplines and educational stages, creating seamless pathways for lifelong learning and employability.

Role of Educational Guidance and Counselling Services (EGCS)

Educational guidance and counselling services (EGCS) aim to promote self-awareness, support academic achievement, aid career exploration, and ensure social inclusion and mental well-being. These services prepare students to make informed life choices, fostering holistic development aligned with national and global educational frameworks like the NEP 2020 and the United Nation Sustainable Development Goals.

Concept and Origin of Guidance and Counselling in India

The conceptual underpinnings of guidance and counselling (G&C) in India are deeply intertwined with both indigenous philosophical traditions and the evolving demands of a modernizing education system. Historically, Indian thought emphasized holistic development through the Gurukul system, where teachers (gurus) nurtured not only academic knowledge but also moral, spiritual, and vocational competencies in their disciples (shishyas). This informal mentoring, rooted in value-based education, can be considered the earliest manifestation of guidance-oriented education (Gupta, 2014).

The formal introduction of structured G&C services in India, however, was influenced significantly by global trends in vocational guidance in the early 20th century. The first explicit recognition of vocational guidance as a formal need emerged post-independence during India's efforts at national reconstruction and planned economic development. The University of Calcutta's pioneering Counselling Program in 1954 marked the institutional beginning of counselling education in India, emphasizing vocational choices and career decision-making. This initiative was soon bolstered by the establishment of the Directorate General of Employment and Training (DGE&T) in the 1950s, which rolled out National Vocational Guidance Services to align education with labour market needs (Kochhar, 1984).

Parallel to these developments, the Kothari Commission (1966) laid a foundational philosophical framework by defining guidance as "an integral part of education" essential for preparing learners for life in a rapidly changing world (Kothari Commission, 1966). The Commission recognized that the education system needed to address students' varied psychological, social, and career-related challenges—not merely academic knowledge dissemination. This broadened understanding catalysed the integration of educational, vocational, and personal-social guidance into the Indian educational landscape.

Throughout the 1970s and 1980s, India's approach to G&C expanded further with NCERT and Regional Institutes of Education (RIEs) initiating structured counsellor training programs, and the Central Bureau of Vocational Guidance (CBVEG) standardizing career counselling practices. Thus, India's G&C system evolved from a singular focus on vocational support towards a comprehensive model incorporating career guidance, academic counselling, and socio-emotional support, a trajectory that continues to shape current policies like NEP 2020.

This conceptual evolution highlights that guidance and counselling in India is not an imported framework but a hybrid model—rooted in indigenous pedagogical ethos and responsive to post-independence developmental needs. As contemporary policy moves toward holistic, student-centric education, understanding these origins is crucial to contextualize and strengthen the future trajectory of educational guidance and counselling services in India.

Historical Development of Guidance and Counselling in India

The evolution of guidance and counselling in India has occurred in a phased manner, reflecting the socio-political priorities and educational reforms of the time.

Phase- 1: Foundation (1951-1985)

Five Years Plan & Early Frameworks

Year	Policy/Initiative	Key Contribution to Counselling
1951–56	1st Five-Year Plan	Links education to employment needs
1952	Mudaliar Commission	First formal push for vocational guidance in schools
1954	University of Calcutta Program	India's first university-level counselling initiative
1956–61	2nd Five-Year Plan	Funds pilot vocational guidance units
1950s	DGE&T (Directorate General of Employment & Training)	Launches national vocational guidance services
1960s	NCERT & RIEs	Begin structured counsellor training programs
1961–66	3rd Five-Year Plan	Expands vocational education; adds career guidance
1964	Kothari Commission	Declares guidance "essential" for education
1966	Central Bureau of Vocational Guidance (CBEVG)	National standardization of career counselling
1969–74	4th Five-Year Plan	Directly funds development of guidance services
1974	IEDC Scheme	Counseling for children with disabilities

The Foundation Phase (1951–1985) began with the realization that education must be aligned with national development goals. The First Five-Year Plan (1951–1956) emphasized human capital formation and initiated vocational guidance. The Mudaliar Commission (1952–53) formally recommended vocational guidance as a key aspect of secondary education. The Kothari Commission (1964–66) further reinforced the necessity of integrating educational and vocational guidance at all stages of schooling (Government of India, 1966). During this period, the Central

Bureau of Vocational Guidance (CBVEG) was established under the Ministry of Labour to coordinate vocational guidance services. In 1974, the Integrated Education for Disabled Children(IEDC) scheme introduced counselling support for children with special needs, marking the beginning of inclusive guidance services.

PHASE-2: Policy Formalization (1986-2011)

Mandates & Global Alignment

Year	Policy/Initiative	Key Contribution to Counseling
1986	National Policy on Education (NPE)	Mandated counseling in schools
1988	Centrally Sponsored Scheme (CSS)	Funded vocational guidance in secondary education
1992	Rehabilitation Council of India (RCI) Act	Regulated training for disability counselors
2000	NCFSE (National Curriculum Framework)	Introduced life skills education
2006	UN CRPD (ratified 2007)	Legally binding inclusive education mandates (Article 24)
2009	RMSA Launched (operational by 2012)	Funded counseling services in secondary schools

The Policy Formalization Phase (1986–2011) was institutionalized by the National Policy on Education (1986), which mandated guidance and counselling as essential components of the school curriculum. This policy shift recognized the psychological, emotional, and vocational needs of learners. The Rehabilitation Council of India (RCI) Act of 1992 professionalized the training and licensing of special educators and counsellors, ensuring standardized service delivery. The National Curriculum Framework (2000) introduced life skills education, expanding the scope of counselling to include emotional and social competencies. By 2009, the Rashtriya Madhyamik Shiksha Abhiyan (RMSA) made provisions for structured guidance and counselling services at the secondary school level, emphasizing equity and access.

PHASE-3 Implementation 2010-2019

Structural Reforms & Right Expansion

Year	Policy/Initiative	Key Contribution to Counseling
2010	CBSE Affiliation Bye-Laws	Mandated 1 counselor per 500 students in CBSE schools
2012	Draft RPWD Bill	Proposed 19 disability categories (vs. 5 in 1995 Act)
2013	NSQF (National Skills Qualification Framework)	Integrated career counseling with skill development
2016	RPWD Act (Rights of Persons with Disabilities)	Enforced inclusive counseling (Sec 17)
2018	Happiness Curriculum (Delhi)	Pioneered socio-emotional learning in schools

The Implementation Phase (2010–2019) was marked by concrete actions and regulations. The CBSE Bye-laws (2010) made it mandatory for affiliated schools to appoint at least one counsellor per 500 students. This was a pivotal step in normalizing psychological support in mainstream education. The draft Rights of Persons with Disabilities (RPWD) Bill (2012) expanded the definition of disability and emphasized support services, culminating in the RPWD Act (2016), which mandated inclusive education and psychological support for 19 categories of disabilities. The National Skills Qualifications Framework (NSQF) in 2013 aligned skill development with career counselling. The Delhi Government’s launch of the Happiness Curriculum in 2018 marked a shift towards socio-emotional learning (SEL) as part of daily education, focusing on mindfulness, empathy, and emotional well-being.

PHASE-4 Transformation (2020-Present)

NEP-2020 & Holistic well-being

Year	Policy/Initiative	Key Contribution to Counseling
2020	National Education Policy (NEP)	Integrated mental health, vocational guidance, and inclusion: • Foundational Stage: Early identification of learning needs • Inclusion Fund: Dedicated budgets for disability counseling • Vocational Integration: Career guidance from Class 6
2020	Manodarpan Initiative	National mental health program for students (post- COVID)
2023	NEP Implementation Guidelines (NCFSE)	Mandated counselor recruitment in all states
2025	Science of Living	Emphasises mindfulness, Emotional awareness, Yoga, Value driven discussion for Students well-being.

The Transformation Phase (2020–Present) is being shaped by the National Education Policy (NEP) 2020, which places guidance and counselling at the core of holistic, multidisciplinary education. NEP 2020 envisions early career exposure from Grade 6, individualized progress tracking, and the creation of a National Assessment and Accreditation Council (NAAC). The policy also mandates the recruitment of trained counsellors and wellness experts in every school. In response to the psychological toll of the COVID-19 pandemic, the Ministry of Education launched the Manodarpan initiative in 2020 to support mental health and well-being. The NEP Implementation Guidelines of 2023 called for state-level action plans, making EGCS integral to systemic education reform. These developments indicate a shift from reactive support to proactive, developmental counselling embedded in school culture.

Comparative Global Perspectives: Guidance and Counselling Policies in Developed Countries

Around the world, guidance and counselling (G&C) services are regarded as essential components of student development, academic success, and emotional well-being. Developed countries such as Denmark, Norway, the United Kingdom, Ireland,

Finland, and Germany have implemented structured, inclusive, and institutionalized guidance frameworks that can inform and inspire similar reforms in India. In Denmark, the 2004 Danish Guidance Act mandates impartial and coordinated guidance across all educational levels, from compulsory schooling through adult education. These services, overseen by the Danish Agency for Higher Education and Science, are made accessible through digital platforms like e Guidance, ensuring nationwide reach regardless of geography.

Norway, through its Education Act (Opplæringsloven), guarantees the right to educational and career guidance for all students. Schools are required to provide personal, academic, and vocational counselling, which is further supported by municipal counselling centres and professional development programs for counsellors. In the United Kingdom, particularly in England, the Gatsby Benchmarks serve as a national quality standard for career guidance. Initiated through the 2017 Careers Strategy, secondary schools must offer impartial career advice from Year 8, ensure student interaction with employers and higher education institutions, and assess effectiveness using tools like Compass.

Ireland adopts a whole-school approach to counselling, integrating academic, personal, and career guidance within a unified school guidance plan. These services are funded and supported by the Department of Education and receive professional and research backing from the National Centre for Guidance in Education (NCGE). Similarly, Finland's national curriculum embeds guidance as a core educational component, with counsellors placed in every school to support student well-being and career planning. Germany follows a decentralized model where the Federal Employment Agency collaborates with schools to provide personalized career guidance and internships, backed by current labour market data.

These countries collectively emphasize several core principles: legally mandated guidance services, nationwide coordination across education and labour sectors, highly trained professionals, digital integration for broader access, and equitable service delivery. As highlighted by Gupta (2014) and the OECD (2021), the effectiveness of these models lies in their ability to be proactive, inclusive, and continuously improved through regular evaluation. These international best practices offer valuable insights for strengthening India's evolving Educational Guidance and Counselling Services (EGCS) in alignment with the objectives outlined in the National Education Policy 2020.

Sarthak Policy Implementation Timelines for EGCS

The National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 implementation is operationalized through two key strategic documents—Sarthak Volume 1 and Volume 2—published by the Ministry of Education. These volumes offer actionable timelines to integrate guidance and counselling services holistically into India’s education system. Under Sarthak Volume 1 (2021), immediate and short-term measures for 2021–2023 include the development of a national framework for school-based career guidance and counselling services, the inclusion of career guidance, life skills education, and socio-emotional learning in the National Curriculum Framework (NCF), and the recruitment and capacity building of school counsellors and wellness experts in all schools. It also emphasizes the establishment of state-level and district-level counselling resource centres and the expansion of the Manodarpan initiative for student mental health support.

In Sarthak Volume 2 (2022), medium- and long-term actions spanning 2023–2030 mandate the appointment of qualified counsellors and career guidance experts in every school by 2025, the integration of digital career guidance platforms to ensure equitable access across rural and urban areas, and cross-sector collaboration with the Ministry of Labour & Employment and industry partners to align counselling with evolving labour market needs. Furthermore, it outlines the development of a national counsellor accreditation and professional development framework, and the establishment of a nationwide monitoring and evaluation mechanism for EGCS through NAAC (National Assessment and Accreditation Council). By 2030, comprehensive guidance and counselling services are envisioned to be fully operational and integrated into the holistic school curriculum as mandated under NEP 2020.

In alignment with these objectives, Task 70 of the SARTHAK document explicitly mandates the establishment of dedicated counselling cells and the recruitment of trained counsellors in every school to address academic, emotional, and career-related needs of students. Complementing this, Task 239 calls for the development and implementation of a robust national career guidance framework, integrating psychometric assessments, career awareness programs, and digital platforms to ensure accessibility and inclusivity in career counselling services (Ministry of Education, 2021; 2022). These structured tasks and timelines reflect India’s commitment to institutionalizing EGCS as a transformative tool for inclusive, equitable, and future-ready education.

Conclusion

Globally, well-established Guidance and Counselling (G&C) frameworks in countries like Singapore, Australia, and the United States have demonstrated the transformative impact of structured guidance systems on students' academic success, emotional well-being, and career readiness. These international models highlight the importance of early career exposure, seamless transitions between educational stages, and the integration of socio-emotional support within school systems.

In the Indian context, G&C services are gradually gaining prominence, though challenges such as the lack of trained professionals and insufficient institutional support still persist. Recent developments like Delhi's Science of Living framework have introduced a more holistic approach by addressing students' emotional, mental, and digital wellness needs, reflecting a step forward in creating meaningful, student-centered learning environments.

The National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 marks a significant milestone by formalizing the role of G&C in the Indian education system. It emphasizes vocational exposure from early schooling, the creation of career guidance cells, and the establishment of strong linkages between school-level vocational training and higher education opportunities. NEP 2020's focus on multidisciplinary learning and flexibility between academic and vocational streams aims to provide students with both personal and professional growth opportunities.

An essential aspect of the evolving G&C framework is the seamless integration of vocational education from school to higher education pathways. There is an increasing emphasis on equipping students with practical, employable skills early in their academic journey, ensuring smooth transitions into higher education and the workforce. This structured connection aims to promote career readiness, lifelong learning, and the development of a more competent workforce, which aligns with the broader objectives of educational reforms in India.

Moving forward, the success of Guidance and Counselling in India will depend on collaborative efforts among policymakers, educators, school leaders, and counsellors to establish comprehensive, accessible, and student-centric services. Continuous capacity building, professional training, and proper monitoring will be

key to transforming G&C from a supportive initiative to a core pillar of the Indian education system. By integrating global best practices with India's unique educational and cultural contexts, a well-structured G&C framework can significantly contribute to the holistic development of students and prepare them to thrive in an increasingly complex, competitive, and interconnected world.

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A Study on Traditional Institutions in Promoting Information Literacy with Special Reference to Nagaon District of Assam

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Abstract

This study pertains to traditional institutions (such as Namghars, Moina Parijat, Satras etc.) and its role in promoting information literacy among the people of Nagaon district. The contribution of these traditional institutions in the development of the society cannot be undermined. The study revealed that traditional institutions play a vital role in the socio- economic development of a community as it serve as checks to the society by making their operations and performance worthy of being examined.

Keywords- *Traditional Institutions, Information Literacy, Namghar, Satras, Moina Parijat*

Introduction

Traditional institutions refer to the social and political authorities that have their historical roots in maintaining peace and order within societies. These institutions vary widely, particularly in the forms of Namghar, Satras, Moina Parijat in Assam. Their origin can be traced back to the time of Srimanta Sankardeva, under the influence of the 'Neo-Vaishnavite movement'. The Neo-Vaishnavite movement initiated by Srimanta Sankardeva, led to the establishment of Namghar and Satras, which have played a crucial role in shaping the socio- cultural fabric of Assamese society. Namghars serve as communal spaces where villagers come together to pray, deliberate on issues, and resolve conflicts, functioning as both religious and socio-political forums. Satras, on the other hand, are monastic institutions that preserve and propagate the teachings and cultural practices of the movement. Traditional institutions like these act as active custodians of cultural heritage, which helps to maintain social cohesion and continuity. They pursue their collective goals through two primary methods: firstly, by utilizing their social influence, derived from the trust and respect they hold within the community (social capital), and secondly, by adhering to their own set of customs,

practices and informal laws, which help in maintaining social balance and order.

Information literacy has become a critical competency in today's technology-driven society, where vast amounts of information are available in multiple formats. This skill set is fundamental to democratic participation, academic success, professional effectiveness, and informed personal decision-making.

Information literacy is the ability to retrieve, analyze, evaluate, exchange, and distribute information effectively across various media platforms, particularly digital and internet-based sources (American Library Association, 2000; Bruce, 2003).

Informed citizens are essential for functioning democracies. Information literacy enables citizens to distinguish credible sources from misinformation and fake information, make well-informed decisions, and participate meaningfully in democratic processes (Elmborg, 2006; Wineburg & McGrew, 2017).

Literature Review: A Study on Traditional Institutions in promoting Information Literacy with special reference to Nagaon District of Assam

Defining Information Literacy

Information literacy is broadly defined as the ability to recognize when information is needed and to locate, evaluate, and use effectively the required information. Doyle (1994) emphasizes that information literacy is a key competency for the information age, enabling individuals to function effectively in an information-rich society. The American Library Association (2000) further codifies these competencies, outlining standards that guide educational and library practices. Eisenberg (2019) underscores the essential nature of these skills for lifelong learning and informed citizenship.

Role of Traditional Institutions

Bruce (2003) presents the 'seven faces of information literacy,' illustrating the diverse ways in which individuals experience and develop these skills within educational and community contexts. Lloyd (2010) expands this perspective by examining how information literacy is cultivated across educational, workplace, and everyday environments, suggesting that traditional institutions adapt their approaches

to meet local needs.

Cultural context: with special reference to Nagaon district of Assam

The cultural heritage of Assam, as detailed by Neog (2004), provides a unique backdrop for understanding the role of traditional institutions in information literacy. Institutions in Nagaon district, such as libraries, schools, and cultural institutions (such as Namghars, Satras etc.), are influenced by local customs, languages, and histories, which shape their information practices and outreach strategies.

Moina Parijat, a notable cultural initiative in Assam, exemplifies how traditional institutions can blend cultural preservation with information literacy efforts, engaging communities through local language publications and programs.

Challenges and evolving practices

Bawden and Robinson (2009) highlight challenges such as information overload and anxiety, which traditional institutions must address through targeted literacy programs. Elmborg (2006) and Pashia (2007) advocate for a critical approach to information literacy, encouraging institutions to empower citizens as consumers, critical evaluators and producers of information.

With the rise of digital information, new frameworks—such as the Association of College and Research Libraries' (2016) Framework for Information Literacy—urge traditional institutions to update their strategies, integrating digital literacy and critical thinking into their programs.

Implications in Nagaon district of Assam

In the context of Nagaon district, traditional institutions are positioned as vital agents for promoting information literacy. Their deep roots in the community, understanding of local needs, and ability to adapt to changing information landscapes make them effective in fostering both basic and advanced information skills. By leveraging cultural heritage, local languages, and community networks, these institutions can address barriers to information access and empower citizens to navigate the complexities of the information society.

Conclusion of the Literature review

The literature underscores the enduring importance of traditional institutions in advancing information literacy, particularly in culturally rich and diverse regions like Nagaon district of Assam. Through a combination of resource provision, community engagement, and culturally relevant programming, these institutions are instrumental

in preparing individuals to participate fully and critically in the information age.

Objectives of the study

The primary aim of this study is to assess the information needs and to evaluate how traditional institutions contribute to enhancing information literacy among the people of Nagaon district, Assam. The specific objectives are:

1. To examine the role of traditional institutions in promoting information literacy in Nagaon district of Assam.
2. To assess the impact of these institutions on the development of information literacy.
3. To evaluate the relevance, values, and advantages of traditional institutions.

Research Methodology

The research methodology is used for conducting the study is questionnaire method and interview method. Keeping in mind about the concern topic and scope and objectives of the study, the following methods have been followed:

Questionnaire Method: A questionnaire was distributed, containing questions related to the topic, to various institutions and libraries in order to collect relevant data.

Interview Method: In addition to the questionnaire, interviews were conducted with key personnel from the respective institutions and libraries to gather further insights.

Traditional system of Information Literacy in Assam: A brief overview

Satras and Namghars :

The Neo-Vaishnavite movement, initiated by Srimanta Sankardev, is defined by two uniquely significant institutions: the Satras and the Namghars. These institutions play a significant role in Assamese society and were established by Srimanta Sankardev in Assam during the late 15th century. Their primary purpose was to disseminate the teachings of new philosophical tradition and to foster a harmonious society.

Originally intended for religious education, the Satras and Namghars evolved into important socio-cultural institutions. They have become synonymous with Assamese identity, influencing various aspects of culture and religion. Despite the ongoing urbanization and development in Assam, the core of the state's culture remains deeply rooted in traditional, rural values. Even in urban and semi-urban areas, residents maintain a connection to this traditional society, highlighting the significant impact of the Satras and Namghars across different residential settings.

While the Satras and Namghars share similar objectives and roles within society, they differ in their structural patterns.

Policy/Initiative	Key Contribution to Counseling
Namghars are micro-level socio-religious institutions found in almost every village of Assam. Typically the residents of the particular village are the members of it, making it a close-knit community organization.	Satras are larger socio-religious institutions with a significant impact, both physically and culturally. Membership is more flexible, and there are no strict rules for becoming a member, allowing for a broader and more diverse community.
Most socio-cultural rituals, community gatherings, and religious functions in the village are conducted under the patronage of the Namghar. It serves as a focal point for both spiritual and social activities	Satras play a pivotal role in the religious, cultural, and educational life of the community. They often organize large-scale events, festivals, and are centers for preservation and propagation of Assamese culture and Vaishnavite traditions. Satras are classified based on the celibacy such as Monastic, Grihasthi, Semi-monastic and admixture.
Namghars are generally modest, small structures located within the village.	Satras are expansive compounds that include several facilities such as residence for the chief (Satradhikar) and members of prayer halls (Namghar or Kirtanghar), Visitor's halls, Other community spaces etc. Unlike Namghars, Satras provide residential facilities for both the chief and the members.

Moina Parijat: Brief Overview and Contributions

Moina Parijat is a prominent non-governmental organization in Assam dedicated to the holistic development of children such as physically, mentally, and intellectually. Its mission is to provide a safe and nurturing environment where children can develop skills, become responsible citizens, and contribute to social, moral, and cultural progress. It also fosters brotherhood by connecting children from diverse regions.

Moina Parijat has branches in nearly every village and town across Assam. These local units form District Moina Parijat chapters, which collectively constitute the All Assam Moina Parijat. Some districts have further regional subdivisions for efficient management. The organization is sustained by committed volunteers passionate about child welfare.

The roots of Moina Parijat trace back to 1948 with the 'Moina Mel' children's program initiated by the Saptahik Janambhumi newspaper in Jorhat, led by Troilokyanath Sarmah. With support from educationists like Biman Boruah, Hemanta Bordoloi, and Jagdish Phukan, an open-air educational model was developed. The first Moina Mel was established in Tarajan Sonarigaon, Jorhat, by Hemanta Bordoloi as a pilot, leading to expansion in multiple towns including Chellenghat, Moranhat, Dibrugarh, Golaghat, Nagaon, Tezpur, and Shillong. In 1950, Nalini Bala Devi established Sadou Asom Parijat Kanan which later became famous as Moina Parijat. (Rahman, 2011)

On 27 June 1954, Moina Mel merged with Parijat Kanan to form the All Assam Moina Parijat, combining the names "Moina" (from Moina Mel) and "Parijat" (from Parijat Kanan). (Rahman, 2011)

Operating without government funding, Moina Parijat relies entirely on public donations and volunteer support. While it does not maintain dedicated libraries, it preserves relevant books and documents. Through its diverse programs and initiatives, Moina Parijat has made significant contributions to promoting information literacy and foundational knowledge among children in Assam.

Traditional Institutions (TIs) of Nagaon District: An analysis

Data were collected from four Traditional Institutions (TIs) across different parts of Nagaon district to assess their infrastructure, available facilities, services, operational modes, challenges, and contributions to information literacy. Of the four TIs approached, three responded positively.

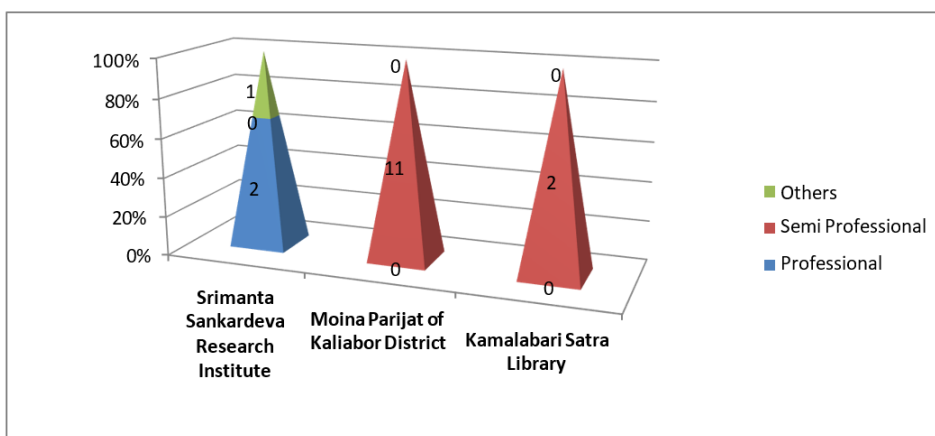
Table - 1
Responded TIs of Nagaon District

Sl. No.	Name of the Institutions/Library	Year of Establishment
1	Srimanta Sankardeva Research Institute	1974
2	Moina Parijat of Kaliabor District	1970
3	Kamalabari Satra Library	1975

Table - 2
Staff pattern of the responded TIs of Nagaon District

Sl. No.	Name of the Institutions/ Library	Professional	Semi Professional	Others
1	Srimanta Sankardeva Research Institute	2		1
2	Moina Parijat of Kaliabor District	0	11	0
3	Kamalabari Satra Library	0	2	0

Figure - 1
Staff pattern of the responded TIs of Nagaon District



Various activities and Facilities offered by TIs

TIs work on various cultural, social and educational activities and also provide many facilities to their users. These are mostly based on their aim of the organization such as Songs, Dances, Drama, Bhaona, Special festival celebration etc.

Table - 3
Activities and facilities offered by TIs

Sl. No.	Name of the Institutions/ Library	Songs & Dances	Essay, Story Writing and Art Competition	Drama	Bhaona	Festival Celebration	Any other activities to promote information literacy
1	Srimanta Sankardeva Research Institute	Yes	No	Yes	No	No	Yes
2	Moina Parijat of Kaliabor District	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
3	Kamalabari Satra Library	No	No	No	No	No	No

Table - 4
Resources and documents available in TIs

Sl. No.	Name of the Institutions/ Library	Books	Newspapers	Magazines	Govt. Publication	Manuscript
1	Srimanta Sankardeva Research Institute	3500	2	2		599
2	Moina Parijat of Kaliabor District	500	6	19		
3	Kamalabari Satra Library	3000	1	1		

Figure - 2
Resources and documents available in TIs

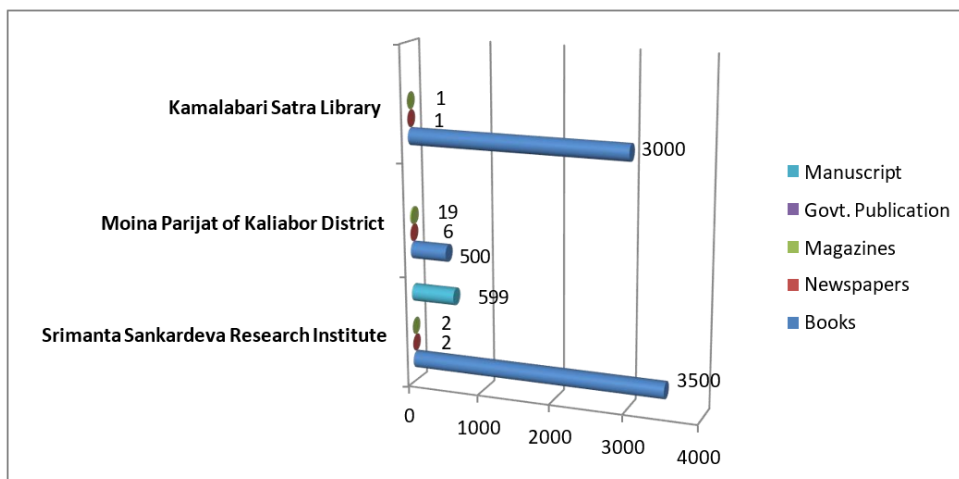


Table - 5
Services offered to special groups by TIs of Nagaon District

Sl. No.	Name of the Institutions / Library	Srimanta Sankardeva Research Institute	Moina Parijat of Kaliabor District	Kamalabari Satra Library
1	Handicapped	No	No	No
2	Farmers	No	No	No
3	Housewives	No	No	No
4	Artisans	No	No	No
5	Children of slum dwellers	No	No	No

Table - 6
Promotional activities to promote information literacy by TIs

Sl. No.	Name of the Institutions / Library	Any programme to promote Information literacy	Trained staff member to conduct program on information literacy
1	Srimanta Sankardeva Research Institute	No	No
2	Moina Parijat of Kaliabor District	No	No
3	Kamalabari Satra Library	No	No

Findings and Suggestions and Conclusion

Findings:

Data were collected from three traditional institutions (TIs) in different parts of Nagaon district to assess their infrastructure, facilities, services, operational modes, challenges, and role in promoting information literacy. The key findings are :

1.Staffing

- Srimanta Sankardeva Research Institute has 2 professional staff and 1 casual worker.
- Moina Parijat of Kaliabor has 11 semi-professional staff, but no professional staff.
- Kamalabari Satra Library has 2 semi-professional staff and no other staff.
- None of the institutions have trained library professionals.

2.Activities

- TIs conduct cultural and social activities (songs, dances, essay/story writing, painting competitions, dramas, festivals) that support non-formal information literacy.
- Srimanta Sankardeva Research Institute organizes songs, dances, and dramas.
- Moina Parijat of Kaliabor offers all such activities.
- Kamalabari Satra Library does not conduct these activities.

3.Resources

- Srimanta Sankardeva Research Institute: 3,500 books, 2 newspapers/magazines, 599 manuscripts.
- Moina Parijat of Kaliabor: 500 books, 6 newspapers, 19 magazines.
- Kamalabari Satra Library: 3,000 books, 1 newspaper, 1 magazine.

4.Information Literacy

- No institution participates in formal information literacy programs or has trained staff in this area.

5. Funding

- No extra funds are provided by the government or agencies for information literacy or related activities.
- No financial assistance is received from adult education agencies.

6.Library facilities

- All TIs have their own library, but none have a separate section for neo-literates or a mobile library facility.

Suggestions

- Traditional Institutions (TIs), especially Moina Parijats, serve as foundational educational centers for young minds in Assam. The government should prioritize and financially support these institutions to enhance their reach and impact.
- TIs in Nagaon district, such as Satras and Namghars, have deep historical roots dating back to the 15th century and possess rich traditional knowledge systems. Proper research and promotion are needed to bring their contributions to wider attention.
- TIs play a significant role in promoting information literacy by organizing cultural and social activities that bridge gaps among illiterates, literates, and neo-literates. However, the short duration of literacy campaigns and lack of follow-up programs often lead neo-literates to relapse into illiteracy. Libraries within TIs can function as ‘after-care’ centers, supporting sustained learning. Therefore, follow-up and adult education programs are essential.
- The government should enact library legislation to establish and promote public libraries and TIs, creating a state-wide library network closely linked to information literacy initiatives, particularly in rural areas.
- Literature should be made available in local languages, and agencies should be encouraged to produce and distribute relevant materials for post-literacy and continuing education. Careful book selection can attract neo-literates and post-literates to libraries.
- Strong motivation is the key to achieving literacy. TIs should observe functional literacy weeks on various topics to inspire adult illiterates and neo-literates.
- Media can play a vital role in raising awareness about literacy. The government, in collaboration with TIs, should utilize posters, local press, radio, television, and social media for literacy promotion.
- Finally, literacy programs should be tailored separately for children (up to 14 years) and adults (15 years and above).

Conclusion

A literate society is fundamental to national progress, especially for a developing country like ours, where advancement in every sphere relies on informed and enlightened citizens. Literacy and libraries are inherently interconnected. One cannot envision a truly literate society without accessible libraries. However, most rural populations still lack access to library facilities. In this context, traditional institutions can play a vital role in bridging the gap between literates and neo-literates.

Despite their potential, the involvement of traditional institutions in literacy and adult education campaigns has been largely overlooked by the government and related agencies. To extend the benefits of education to the wider population, it is essential to promote and integrate traditional institutions alongside formal literacy initiatives.

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Digital Learning Divides: Exploring the Role of Social and Cultural Capital in Online Education

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Abstract

Online learning has emerged as a key component of education system in this age of digital revolution. India has achieved significant progress in expanding access to high-quality education, boosting elementary school enrollment and lowering the rate of dropouts through online education. However, the real potential of online education rests in its capacity to be universally accessible, dismantling obstacles and fostering an environment that is genuinely inclusive. The interplay of many inequalities causes variations in student's access to, usage of, and attitudes toward Information and Communication Technology (ICT). As a result, students from low-income families, single-parent households, rural areas and marginalized linguistic, religious and ethnic groups are especially vulnerable. Against this background, the present study critically investigates how various dimensions of social and cultural capital embedded in the family, school and peer contexts influence the educational expectation of children. In order to achieve this, the socio-economic background of students, technological experiences have been investigated in a qualitative manner. It also provides further understanding of the ways in which the digital divide interacts with larger power structures in society.

Keywords- *Education, family, digital inequality, socio-cultural capital*

Introduction

Online learning has become a vital part of the education system in this digital age. India has made notable progress in expanding access to quality education, increasing elementary school enrollment, and reducing dropout rates. To enhance teaching, learning, and assessment methods, as well as to improve access for underprivileged groups, the New Education Policy 2020 (NEP 2020) has recommended the use and

integration of technology in teacher training. To support digital initiatives like DTH channels, smart schools, and virtual classrooms, the Samagra Shiksha programme has been aligned with NEP 2020. In recent years, online education has proven to be the most effective alternative to traditional classroom instruction in mitigating the negative impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic and the resulting lockdown on students' academic achievements. However, the true potential of online education lies in its ability to be universally accessible, breaking down barriers and promoting a genuinely inclusive environment. Many students face difficulties in learning due to shortages of qualified teachers, inadequate instructional resources, temporary classrooms, and other challenges. Besides a student's skills and effort, their family background also influences their access to educational resources in the competition for learning opportunities. The unequal access to cultural, social, and economic resources among different socio-economic groups inevitably affects the educational resources available to children (Fan, 2014). Additionally, poverty remains one of the biggest barriers, with children from lower socio-economic backgrounds nearly five times more likely than those from wealthier families to not attend primary school. Digital inequality tends to widen when children with disabilities and members of ethnic and religious minorities are left behind (UNICEF, 2020).

Understanding Digital Gaps in Education

Given the growing prevalence of ICT in the field of education, there is a concern that digital inequality would worsen already existing social inequalities. In the state of Assam, many people, particularly in rural areas, low-income households, and people in impoverished states, lack smart phones and internet access. A lack of access to computers and smart phones, inadequate internet connectivity, and a lack of technical understanding among students, instructors, and guardians have caused many students and teachers to lag in obtaining and delivering education. According to Pratham Education Foundation & ASER Centre (2020), only 52.4 per cent of students in government schools' own smart phones compared to 78.3 per cent of students at private schools. Given the increasing dependence on online education and the persistent digital divide, it becomes essential to investigate how various social and cultural contexts shape students' access to and engagement with digital education. Even while online learning has the potential to be inclusive and accessible, students' experiences vary based on their socio-economic status, family environment and community identity.

Against this background, this study critically investigates the disparities in academic performance among students and intends to determine how different

aspects of social, economic and cultural capital ingrained in the peer, school and home contexts affect children's expectations for their schooling. The study also comprehends the interconnected relationship between socio-cultural and economic capital in the form of the growing gap in technology use, knowledge, and access among primary school students of Udalguri district of Assam. Numerous challenges that students from various socio-economic and cultural backgrounds encounter while utilizing digital technology for learning are anticipated to be made clear by this study. To achieve this, various social, economic, and cultural aspects, including the socio-economic background of students, technological experience have been investigated qualitatively.

Objectives of the Study

In order to gain a deeper understanding of how digital inequality interacts with social and cultural structures, this study adopts an exploratory, qualitative approach. With the aim of revealing the complex ways that social and cultural capital impact educational experience in the digital age, the study is guided by the following objectives:

- To examine how family, school, and peer contexts shape children's access to and use of online education.
- To explore the role of socio-economic status in influencing students' technological experience and educational expectations.
- To understand how the digital divide reflects and reinforces broader social inequalities based on class, caste and ethnicity.

The following research questions have been developed to guide the investigation and provide insight into the complex relationship between digital access, social and cultural capital, and educational outcomes:

- How does family background (economic, cultural and social capital) influence children's participation in online education?
- In what ways do school and peer networks impact students' engagement with online learning platforms?
- How does digital inequality intersect with broader structures of social exclusion, such as poverty or marginalization based on class, caste or ethnicity?

Methodology

The study uses a qualitative approach to explore the lived experiences, challenges and expectations of students as they navigate the digital education

landscape. The methodology is designed from a sociological perspective involving both primary and secondary sources of data. The secondary data has been collected from newspapers, journal articles, and various reports. The fieldwork for the study has been conducted at three primary schools of Udalguri district, namely, Bineswar Brahma Lower Primary School, Pub-Jamuguri Lower Primary School, and Amala Boro Lower Primary School. Most of the students in these schools belong to the Bodo-Kachari tribal community. To explore the nuanced experiences of digital education among various stakeholders, this study employed semi-structured interviews as the primary method of data collection. Interviews were conducted with three key groups: primary school students, their parents or guardians, and teachers. For students, the questions focused on understanding their daily engagement with online learning. They were asked how they attend classes (using a phone, computer, or with help from others), who supports them at home during digital learning, and what they like or dislike about online classes. Students were also asked to share any difficulties they face, such as issues with internet connectivity, lack of access to devices, or emotional stress when they are unable to attend classes. Further, they were encouraged to talk about their dreams and aspirations and reflect on whether they feel their current education especially in the online format is helping them achieve those goals. The interviews also aimed to capture their perceptions of whether their peers have similar or different online learning experiences.

For parents and guardians, the interview questions were designed to assess the level of digital access within the household and the kind of academic support children receive at home. They were asked whether their child had access to a smart phone, computer, or reliable internet connection, and if any adult in the family could assist with online learning. Further, they were asked to share their aspirations for their child's future and their perception of the fairness and inclusiveness of the digital learning process. Their responses provided insight into how socio-economic and cultural factors influence educational support at home.

Interviews with teachers offered another layer of understanding about the broader systemic and pedagogical issues in digital education. Teachers were asked about their experience of conducting online classes and the specific challenges they encountered, especially while teaching students from rural, economically disadvantaged, or marginalized backgrounds. Collectively, these interviews aimed to uncover the complex interplay of socio-economic, cultural, and technological factors that shape educational experiences and expectations in the context of growing digital inequality.

From Classroom to Class Structure: Education as Socio-cultural Reproduction

Social scientists have used the concept of capital to understand the mechanisms that shape people's life chances and community well-being (Lin, 2000). The introduction of various types of capital, such as social, cultural, and symbolic capital, was pioneered by Bourdieu (1986), who transformed the concept of capital by bringing it alongside the economic capital of Marx. He offers insights into the social world and class system, arguing that the objective structure of unequal capital distribution is the cause of social inequality. Social capital is the total of available or prospective resources associated with long-term networks that may or may not be founded on institutionalized relationships of acceptance and respect for one another (Ibid.). Social and cultural capital, according to Lareau & Weininger (2003), is a significant contributing factor to educational disparity. Putnam (2002) suggests that 'inside the walls' social capital refers to the networks that exist within schools, while 'outside the walls' social capital refers to the networks that connect schools to the larger community. For instance, in higher education, the relationships between students are crucial to their academic success and advancements in their educational levels and contribute to raising their aspirations. An average student's aspiration will undoubtedly rise if he or she makes connections with smarter students. Social ties and relationships with families and communities outside of the classroom are also crucial for academic success.

Bourdieu's social reproduction theory (1977) looks at the social mechanisms that produce and sustain social reproduction and allow for the upkeep of a classed society. Since the educational system is founded on the standards and expertise of the upper classes, he believes it is essential to legitimize current social structures and class relations. Children who are familiar with the dominant culture are given preference by the educational system's 'apparently neutral attitude', which reflects the power dynamics in society at large. This is primarily due to linguistic and cultural competence, as well as the relationship of familiarity with culture that can only be created by family upbringing when it transmits the dominant culture (ibid.). He claims that the inequalities in the competition for cultural and financial capital are reflected in the hierarchies that exist within the educational system. The hierarchy of the social world is established in the educational system, according to Bourdieu (1989, 1984). Families with varying socio-economic backgrounds develop distinct thought and reasoning systems, or what Bourdieu calls *habitus*, which are ways of seeing the world and a person's mental structure that support social reproduction (Bourdieu, 1989). Because it serves as a foundation for understanding and accepting the lessons taught

in the classroom, the habitus that are mostly formed in the home is significant. Blau & Duncan (1967) and Lerner et al. (2009) suggest that children's learning attitudes and academic achievement goals are significantly influenced by the socio-economic status of their families. Because they possess greater socio-cultural capital, children from higher socioeconomic classes have more resources for development and are more likely than their working-class counterparts to succeed in school, secure successful jobs, and earn high salaries. Disparities in educational achievement can be linked to varying degrees of social capital that are created within the networks and relationships of the families served by the school. For example, the ideals that inspire students to reach higher goals and the proper school climate are examples of how social capital promotes educational success. Thus, school, community, and family social capital all have a significant impact on students' development (Acar, 2011).

This indicates that children from less affluent families, who perceive schools as strange and frightening places, are not receiving any compensation from the educational system for their lack of these competencies. Students from poor socio-economic backgrounds, therefore, have a harder time adapting to the school environment, achieving undesirable academic outcomes, and having fewer aspirations for their future. Because students from families with high educational attainment, wealth and social standing succeed more in schools and in the workplace, the educational system thus contributes significantly to the maintenance of social inequality by sustaining social stratification patterns and preserving their inherited positions of authority. According to Goldthorpe (2007), social reproduction is thus assured by the transfer of parental capital to their children as well as by the passive function of an educational system that prevents social change. Cultural capital is passed down naturally from the family to the school for children from higher socio-economic classes (Bourdieu, 1986). Cultural capital is acknowledged and rewarded by teachers in subtle ways. For example, they interact more effectively with students who have more cultural capital and even perceive them as more intelligent or gifted than students who lack those (DiMaggio, 1982). Children from less privileged families, on the other hand, are less fortunate in the educational system since they do not have as much cultural capital at home.

Findings of the Study

Recent studies on social reproduction of education show that educational disparities that benefit the wealthier classes and deepen the gap between them and the unprivileged segments of society are still being transmitted at an increasing rate. According to Van Dijk (2005), the concept of inequality does not originate from the

character of individuals or certain collectives or systems. Rather, this concept of inequality is predicated on person-to-person connections, relationships, exchanges, and transactions. Digital inequality is therefore a social problem rather than a technical one.

Socio-Cultural Capital and the Reproduction of Inequality

Social inequality based on socio-economic status, gender, and ethnicity can all be made worse by digital inequality. Accessing and using digital technology may be considerably more difficult for those who are already marginalized, which can exacerbate already existing social inequalities and have long-term effects on both individuals and society. In the study area, it has been noted that the students are in a disadvantaged educational situation since they lack socio-economic and cultural capital. It is found from the interviews and focused group discussions with parents that their financial situation has a detrimental effect on their children's education because they are unable to give them the necessities for online education. The absence of socio-economic capital since they lack the means to generate a good living, and no friends or social circle who are sufficiently educated to inform them of the advantages and opportunities of education. Due to their social standing, they are also unable to provide their children with appropriate socialization skills. For them, achieving upward mobility and moving up the social ladder becomes extremely challenging. The lack of high culture knowledge has always plagued the people, which have an impact on their everyday wages as well as how their children are socialized.

Their children's education is negatively impacted by their lack of financial capital, yet merely viewing their issues via an economic prism will not provide a complete picture. Thus, it is also necessary to introduce the concepts of socialization and the role of socio-cultural capital here. According to the study, stronger social resources are typically linked to the strength of network connections or locations. The lack of education in their social networks prevents them from being informed about job opportunities, skills needed in the market, or pertinent courses and academic institutions. Additionally, many are unable to comprehend the steps involved in submitting the paperwork and applying online. They can therefore be considered victims of the systemic exclusion that society has imposed upon them. The findings indicate a relationship between academic success and the material component of cultural capital as well as the inherent expression of a particular family habitus in educational opportunities. The results show that the material and social circumstances of the family had an impact on the student's academic performance. The number of resources they can devote to education and overall growth is heavily influenced

by their social background. This could be because material resources can be swiftly transformed into knowledge (by paying for private tutoring or taking an online course to supplement what is learned in school).

Digital Inequalities and Educational Expectations

The field findings show that students from less affluent families are less likely to want to pursue higher education. One of the interviewees gave a torturous and unfavorable response when asked about the prospects and chances for upward mobility in society:

“People like us, in my opinion, have little chance of moving up the social scale. The past has not been kind to us. We have been dealing with a lack of possibilities for a long time. My mother used to work as a maid, and I currently hold the same position. The poverty cycle and lack of educational opportunities have plagued us from generation to generation. But when it comes to my daughter, I have big dreams.”

The comment highlights several significant issues that the underprivileged groups face. Their issues have a universal tone since they are like those that many minorities around the world deal with. Their poverty and backwardness have been continuously reproduced throughout society, maybe with historical roots in Marx’s economic determinism theory. We cannot overlook the social placement of minorities, even while economic infrastructure may be the source of cultural replication of backwardness. It brings us to the domain of the connection between culture and education and the reasons why certain children from ‘high’ cultures are thought to be doing better in schools than children from ‘low’ cultures. Their lack of social and cultural capital both within and outside the schools is the cause of their poor academic achievement. A recurrent question concerning the challenges they faced during the COVID-19 outbreak when education was shifted to an online learning format, was asked in every interview. Nearly most of them didn’t have smart phones, and some families faced trouble in accessing teaching and learning materials because of different connectivity and electrical problems. One respondent who did not have a smart phone or access to an electricity connection at home made the following statement:

“Due to our financial situation, we were unable to purchase a smart phone during the lockdown phase. Taking notes and participating in online classes became quite difficult for me. Nevertheless, I was able to manage the reading materials from my neighboring classmates.”

According to field findings, the degree of family ties has a significant impact on the attitudes and behaviours that parents and children have toward education. Nonetheless, it is pleasant to know that the respondents have a positive outlook on education and believe that their children's education will help them escape the poverty cycle they have seen for generations. As the study shows, people invest and employ their economic, social and cultural resources to elevate their social standing. In addition to establishing the first level of digital divide between who can and cannot access the internet, an individual's capital also establishes the second level, which focuses on skills and ability to use these technologies, and the third level, which is based on the economic, social, cultural, political and personal benefits of using these technologies.

The Way Forward

Education has historically excluded several people and groups, including women, minorities and underprivileged castes and classes. Therefore, the issues of 'digital divide need to be tackled properly; otherwise, it can pose serious socio-economic implications for those who do not have access to it. The government's effort should concentrate on creating and fostering positive social capital throughout the state. Effective utilization of social capital can improve the results of the existing educational policies. Adopting policy designs that aim to stimulate latent social capital and modify current policies that erode social capital are becoming increasingly necessary for a healthy democracy to implement social policies in an effective manner. For the best results at both micro and macro levels, the government should therefore invest in social, economic, and cultural capital in addition to education. Therefore, it is crucial that policymakers who are interested in improving educational standards consider the socio-economic and cultural background of education in addition to textbooks, uniforms, and certificates. Building internet infrastructure, lowering the cost of gadgets and connections, offering literacy and digital skill training, and developing digital platforms that are accessible to all users and accommodate their various demands are all part of the effort to reduce the digital divide. Ensuring that everyone has an equal opportunity to access and profit from the digital world should be the goal of these initiatives.

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Challenges Faced by Anganwadi Workers in Delivering Services under the Integrated Child Development Services (ICDS) Program in Dhemaji District, Assam

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Abstract

This study aims to explore the challenges faced by Anganwadi workers in delivering services in Dhemaji district, Assam, by identify the factors affecting their ability to deliver services effectively, and suggest recommendations for improvement. A descriptive survey method was employed, using a mixed-methods approach to collect and analyze data. A total of 100 Anganwadi workers were selected from 2 blocks in Dhemaji district. Face-to-face interviews were conducted to collect data, which was analyzed using percentage analysis. The study reveals that Anganwadi workers face significant challenges related to inadequate infrastructure, insufficient training and resources, low salaries and delayed payments, high workload and stress, and lack of community support.

Keywords- *Anganwadi workers, ICDS program, challenges, service delivery, inadequate infrastructure, insufficient training and resources, low salaries and delayed payments, high workload and stress, lack of community support*

Introduction

The Integrated Child Development Services (ICDS) program is a government-sponsored initiative aimed at improving the health, nutrition, and education of children under six years of age. Anganwadi workers are the frontline workers responsible for implementing the program at the grassroots level. Despite their critical role, Anganwadi workers face numerous challenges that affect their ability to deliver services effectively.

The ICDS program is a comprehensive initiative that aims to address the nutritional and health needs of children and pregnant women in India. The program provides a range of services, including supplementary nutrition, health check-ups, and education. Anganwadi workers play a vital role in delivering these services and ensuring that they reach the most vulnerable populations.

The Role of Anganwadi Workers

Anganwadi workers are the frontline workers responsible for implementing the ICDS program at the grassroots level. They play a vital role in delivering services to children and pregnant women, ensuring that they receive the necessary support and care to lead healthy and productive lives. Anganwadi workers are responsible for providing a range of services, including :

- **Supplementary nutrition:** Anganwadi workers provide supplementary nutrition to children and pregnant women, helping to address malnutrition and related health problems.
- **Health check-ups:** Anganwadi workers conduct regular health check-ups, monitoring the health and well-being of children and pregnant women.
- **Education:** Anganwadi workers provide education and support to children, helping to promote their cognitive and social development.

Challenges Faced by Anganwadi Workers

Anganwadi workers play a vital role in delivering essential services to children and pregnant women. However, they face numerous challenges that impact their ability to deliver services effectively. The key challenges include :

- **Inadequate Infrastructure:** Inadequate infrastructure poses a significant challenge to Anganwadi workers, hindering their ability to deliver essential services like healthcare, nutrition, and education. Limited resources, including inadequate building conditions, lack of clean water facilities, insufficient space for activities, poor sanitation facilities etc. This can compromise the quality of services, limit access to care, and negatively impact the health and well-being of children and pregnant women.
- **Insufficient training and resources:** They often lack adequate training in critical areas such as healthcare, nutrition, and education, which can impact their competence and confidence. Furthermore, Anganwadi workers may not receive necessary support and guidance, leaving them without the supervision and mentoring needed to excel in their roles. Limited access to relevant resources and materials also restricts their capacity to provide accurate information and effective services.
- **Low Salaries and Delayed Payments:** Anganwadi workers often face significant financial challenges due to low salaries and delayed payments.

Their salaries may not adequately reflect their workload and responsibilities, leading to feelings of undervaluation and frustration.

- **High Workload and Stress:** Anganwadi workers often face a high workload and stress due to managing large numbers of children and pregnant women, performing multiple tasks, and meeting targets and deadlines. Their responsibilities can be overwhelming, ranging from providing healthcare and nutrition services to delivering education and meeting programmatic targets.
- **Lack of Community Support:** Limited community awareness and participation can make it difficult for workers to engage with beneficiaries and achieve their goals. Furthermore, a lack of cooperation and support from community members can lead to resistance or apathy, undermining the impact of Anganwadi services.

Significance of the Study

The study on “Challenges Faced by Anganwadi Workers in Delivering Services under the Integrated Child Development Services (ICDS) Program in Dhemaji District, Assam” is significant as it will provide insights into the challenges faced by Anganwadi workers in implementing the Integrated Child Development Services (ICDS) program. Despite the crucial role Anganwadi workers play in delivering essential services to children and pregnant women, there is limited research on the challenges they encounter. This study aims to fill this knowledge gap by exploring the challenges faced by Anganwadi workers in Dhemaji district, Assam, and providing insights that can inform policy makers and program formulators decisions to support them. By understanding these challenges, the study can contribute to improving the effectiveness of the ICDS program and ultimately enhancing the health, nutrition, and education outcomes of vulnerable populations.

Objectives of the study

The study has three primary objectives that aim to explore the challenges faced by Anganwadi workers in delivering services in Dhemaji district, Assam.

- To understand the challenges faced by Anganwadi workers in delivering services in Dhemaji district, Assam.
- To identify the factors that affect the ability of Anganwadi workers to deliver services effectively.

- To suggest recommendations for improving the delivery of ICDS services by Anganwadi workers in Dhemaji district, Assam.

The objectives of the study are to contribute to the improvement of the ICDS program in Dhemaji district, Assam, by identifying the challenges faced by Anganwadi workers and providing recommendations for improvement. By achieving this goal, the study aims to ultimately benefit the children and pregnant women served by the program and improve their health, nutrition, and education outcomes.

Design of the Study

- **Methodology:** Descriptive survey method was used for carried out the current study, as its primary objective was to explore the challenges of Anganwadi Workers that served as providers of ECCE in the Dhemaji District.
- **Population:** All the Anganwadi Workers (AWWs) under ICDS of Dhemaji District were taken as population. This district comprises 2 sub-divisions and 4 blocks.
- **Sample and Sampling technique:** The researcher selected a total of 100 AWWs from 2 blocks under the Dhemaji District, Assam. The Sample was selected through a combination of Multistage Random sampling and Purposive sampling technique.
- **Statistical analysis:** This study employed a mixed-methods approach, combining quantitative and qualitative data collection and analysis methods to provide a comprehensive understanding of the challenges of Anganwadi Workers in Dhemaji District. The study was analysed using percentage analysis only. No hypotheses were formulated.
- **Tool used:** The survey was administered through face-to-face interviews with Anganwadi workers and helpers, ensuring a high response rate and accurate data collection. The survey instrument was designed to capture both quantitative and qualitative data, with questions focused on challenges of Anganwadi Workers in Dhemaji District.

Delimitation of the study

1. The study confined to Dhemaji district only.
2. The study delimited in 100 Anganwadi Workers (AWWs).

Data Analysis and Interpretation

Objective (I) : To Explore the Challenges Faced by Anganwadi Workers in Delivering Services

Table - 1
Demographic Information of Surveyed Anganwadi Workers

Demographic Variable	Percentage	Total
Gender		
Female	100%	100
Age		
20-30 years	20%	20
31-40 years	60%	60
41-50 years	10%	10
Above 50 years	10%	10
Education level		
H.S.L.C	40%	40
H.S.	40%	40
Graduation	20%	20

The survey provides valuable insights into the demographic profile of Anganwadi workers who participated in the study. The respondents were all women, reflecting the predominantly female workforce in this sector.

Age Distribution : The age distribution of Anganwadi workers reveals that -

- 20% of respondents were between 20 and 30 years old, indicating a relatively young segment of the workforce.
- 60% of respondents were between 31 and 40 years old, suggesting that the majority of Anganwadi workers are in their middle age.
- 10% of respondents were between 41 and 50 years old, indicating a smaller proportion of workers in this age group.
- 10% of respondents were over 50 years old, highlighting the presence of experienced and mature workers in the sector.

Educational Qualifications : The educational qualifications of Anganwadi workers show that:

- 40% of respondents had completed Higher Secondary Leaving Certificate (H.S.L.C.), indicating a basic level of education.
- 40% of respondents had passed Higher Secondary, suggesting a slightly higher level of education.
- 20% of respondents had pursued further education beyond Higher Secondary, indicating a smaller proportion of workers with advanced educational qualifications.

Implications: The demographic profile of Anganwadi workers has implications for their effectiveness in delivering services. For instance -

- The age distribution suggests that Anganwadi workers may have varying levels of experience and maturity, which can impact their ability to deliver services.
- The educational qualifications indicate that Anganwadi workers may require additional training and support to enhance their skills and knowledge.

The demographic profile of Anganwadi workers provides valuable insights into their characteristics and background. Understanding these demographics can help policymakers and program managers design targeted interventions to support Anganwadi workers and improve the delivery of services under the ICDS program.

Table-2
Challenges Faced by Anganwadi Workers

Sl. No.	Challenge	Percentage	Total
1	Inadequate Infrastructure	70%	70
2	Insufficient Training and Resources	80%	80
3	Low Salaries and Delayed Payments	60%	60
4	High Workload and Stress	50%	50
5	Lack of Community Support	40%	40

Challenges Faced by Anganwadi Workers in Dhemaji District

The survey highlights the significant challenges faced by Anganwadi workers in Dhemaji District, which can be broadly categorized into five key areas:

- **Inadequate Infrastructure:** 70% of Anganwadi workers cited inadequate infrastructure as a major challenge. This includes poor condition of Anganwadi buildings, lack of equipment, and insufficient supplies, which can hinder the delivery of services.
- **Insufficient Training and Resources:** A staggering 80% of Anganwadi workers reported that they lack sufficient training and resources to perform their duties effectively. This suggests that workers may not have the necessary skills, knowledge, or tools to deliver high-quality services.
- **Low Salaries and Delayed Payments:** 60% of Anganwadi workers reported that low salaries and delayed payments are significant challenges. This can lead to financial stress, demotivation, and decreased job satisfaction among workers.
- **High Workload and Stress:** 50% of Anganwadi workers reported that high workload and stress are major concerns. Managing large numbers of children and pregnant women, performing multiple tasks, and meeting targets can be overwhelming for workers.
- **Lack of Community Support:** 40% of Anganwadi workers struggle with lack of community support, which makes it difficult for them to deliver services effectively. Community awareness and participation are crucial for the success of ICDS programs.

Implications: These challenges have significant implications for the effectiveness of Anganwadi workers and the overall success of ICDS programs. Addressing these challenges is essential to ensure that Anganwadi workers can deliver high-quality services and support the health and well-being of children and pregnant women.

Objective (II) : To Identify the Factors that Affect the Ability of Anganwadi Workers to Deliver Services Effectively

1. Infrastructure Problems Faced by Anganwadi Workers:

Table - 3
Infrastructure Challenges

Infrastructure Challenge	Percentage	Total
Inadequate Building Conditions	50%	50
Lack of Clean Water Facilities	40%	40
Insufficient Space for Activities	60%	60
Poor Sanitation Facilities	30%	30

The survey highlights the significant infrastructure problems faced by Anganwadi workers, which can impact their ability to deliver services effectively. The key infrastructure challenges reported by workers include:

- **Poor Condition of Buildings:** 50% of Anganwadi workers reported that their buildings were in poor shape, which can compromise the safety and quality of services delivered.
- **Lack of Clean Water:** 40% of workers cited the absence of clean water, which is essential for maintaining hygiene and providing quality services, particularly for children and pregnant women.
- **Insufficient Space:** 60% of workers reported that they didn't have enough room for activities, which can limit the number of children and pregnant women that can be served and compromise the quality of services delivered.
- **Poor Sanitation Facilities:** 30% of workers reported having bad sanitation facilities, which can compromise the health and hygiene of children and pregnant women.

Implications : These infrastructure problems have significant implications for the health, safety, and well-being of children and pregnant women served by Anganwadi workers. Poor infrastructure can:

- Compromise the quality of services delivered
- Increase the risk of water-borne and sanitation-related diseases

- Limit the accessibility and utilization of services

2. Challenges Faced by Anganwadi Workers: Training and Resources

Table 4
Training and Resource Challenges

Training and Resource Challenge	Percentage	Total
Lack of Medical Supplies and Equipment	60%	60
Insufficient Educational Materials	60%	60
Limited Training on Health Care Practices	80%	80
Inadequate Support from Supervisors	40%	40

The survey highlights significant challenges faced by Anganwadi workers related to training and resources, which are essential for delivering effective healthcare services. The key findings include:

- **Insufficient Medical Supplies and Equipment:** 60% of Anganwadi workers reported that they lacked sufficient medical supplies and equipment, which can compromise the quality of healthcare services provided.
- **Limited Educational Materials:** 60% of workers cited a lack of proper educational materials, which are crucial for promoting health awareness and education among children and caregivers.
- **Need for Additional Training:** 80% of Anganwadi workers felt that they required more training on healthcare practices, which suggests that existing training programs may not be adequate or comprehensive enough.
- **Inadequate Supervisory Support:** 40% of workers mentioned that they did not receive sufficient support from their supervisors, which can impact their ability to deliver services effectively and address challenges.

Implications: These challenges have significant implications for the effectiveness of Anganwadi services and the health outcomes of children and caregivers. Addressing these challenges is essential to ensure that Anganwadi workers can provide high-quality services.

3. Challenges Faced by Anganwadi Workers: Salaries and Payments

Table - 5
Salary and Payment Challenges

Salary and Payment Challenge	Percentage	Total
Low Salaries	80%	80
Delayed Salary Payments	40%	40
Lack of Benefits	40%	40
Wage Disparities among Workers	30%	30

The survey highlights significant challenges faced by Anganwadi workers related to salaries and payments, which can impact their motivation, job satisfaction, and overall well-being. The key findings include:

- **Low Salaries:** 80% of Anganwadi workers reported that they receive low salaries, which can make it difficult for them to sustain themselves financially and may lead to dissatisfaction with their job.
- **Delays in Payments:** 40% of workers faced delays in getting paid, which can cause financial stress and uncertainty, making it challenging for them to manage their personal and professional lives.
- **Lack of Benefits:** 40% of workers pointed out that they do not receive benefits, which can further exacerbate their financial struggles and reduce their job satisfaction.
- **Unequal Pay:** 30% of workers mentioned unequal pay among workers, which can lead to feelings of unfairness, demotivation, and dissatisfaction among workers.

Implications: These challenges have significant implications for the job satisfaction, motivation, and retention of Anganwadi workers. Addressing these challenges is essential to ensure that workers are fairly compensated and supported.

4. Challenges Faced by Anganwadi Workers: Workload and Stress

Table-6
Workload and Stress Challenges

Workload and Stress Challenge	Percentage	Total
Overwhelming Workload	60%	60
Lack of Time for Administrative Tasks	50%	50
Emotional Stress and Burnout	40%	40
Inadequate Support for Mental Health	20%	20

The survey highlights significant challenges faced by Anganwadi workers related to workload and stress, which can impact their well-being and job performance. The key findings include:

- **Overwhelming Workload:** 60% of Anganwadi workers felt overwhelmed by their work, which can lead to decreased productivity, increased errors, and burnout.
- **Insufficient Time for Paperwork:** 50% of workers reported not having enough time to complete paperwork, which can lead to administrative delays, inefficiencies, and potential errors.
- **Burnout and Emotional Exhaustion:** 40% of workers felt drained and burnt out, which can impact their physical and mental health, job satisfaction, and ability to provide quality services.
- **Lack of Mental Health Support:** 20% of workers mentioned not receiving enough help for their mental health, which can exacerbate stress, burnout, and other mental health issues.

Implications : These challenges have significant implications for the well-being and job performance of Anganwadi workers. Addressing these challenges is essential to ensure that workers can manage their workload effectively, maintain their physical and mental health, and provide high-quality services.

5. Challenges Faced by Anganwadi Workers: Community Support

Table - 7
Community Support Challenges

Community Support Challenge	Percentage	Total
Lack of Parental Involvement	30%	30
Limited Cooperation from Local Authorities	30%	30
Insufficient Support from Community Leaders	30%	30
Resistance to Health Programs	20%	20

The survey highlights significant challenges faced by Anganwadi workers related to community support, which can impact their ability to deliver effective services. The key findings include:

- **Limited Parental Involvement:** 30% of Anganwadi workers reported that parents weren't involved enough, which can hinder the effectiveness of programs and services.
- **Poor Collaboration with Local Authorities:** 30% of workers mentioned that local authorities weren't working well with them, which can limit access to resources, support, and services.
- **Insufficient Support from Community Leaders:** 30% of workers felt that community leaders didn't provide enough help, which can impact the credibility and reach of Anganwadi programs.
- **Resistance from Community Members:** 20% of workers reported encountering resistance from community members who opposed health programs, which can create challenges for workers and limit the impact of their efforts.

Implications: These challenges have significant implications for the effectiveness of Anganwadi services and the health outcomes of children and families. Addressing these challenges is essential to build trust, foster collaboration, and promote community engagement

Objective (III): To Suggest Recommendations for Improving the Delivery of ICDS Services

Based on the challenges faced by Anganwadi workers and the factors that affect their ability to deliver services effectively, the following recommendations are suggested:

- **Infrastructure Upgrades:** Providing adequate infrastructure, such as well-maintained buildings, equipment, and supplies, to support Anganwadi workers in delivering services effectively.
- **Comprehensive Training:** Offering regular training and capacity-building programs to enhance Anganwadi workers' skills and knowledge in areas such as healthcare, nutrition, and education.
- **Supportive Supervision:** Ensuring regular supportive supervision and monitoring to provide Anganwadi workers with guidance, feedback, and encouragement.
- **Worker Welfare:** Addressing issues related to low salaries, delayed payments, and workload to improve Anganwadi workers' job satisfaction and well-being.
- **Community Engagement:** Fostering community awareness and participation through outreach activities to promote the importance of ICDS services.
- **Resource Allocation:** Allocating sufficient resources, including funds and personnel, to support the effective delivery of ICDS services.
- **Monitoring and Evaluation:** Establishing a robust monitoring and evaluation system to track progress, identify areas for improvement, and make data-driven decisions.

By implementing these recommendations, ICDS services can be strengthened, and Anganwadi workers can deliver high-quality services to children and pregnant women, ultimately improving their health, nutrition, and education outcomes.

Conclusion

The Anganwadi workers face significant challenges in delivering services under the Integrated Child Development Services (ICDS) program, including inadequate infrastructure, limited training and support, high workload, and

community resistance. The study's findings highlight the need for a comprehensive approach to address these challenges and improve the delivery of ICDS services. The study's recommendations, including capacity building, infrastructure support, regular supervision and support, and community awareness and participation, can help enhance the skills and knowledge of Anganwadi workers, improve infrastructure and resources, and increase community awareness and cooperation. Ultimately, the study's findings and recommendations can inform policy and programmatic decisions aimed at improving the delivery of ICDS services and promoting better health and nutrition outcomes for children and pregnant women.

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The background of the cover is a light blue and yellow gradient with a collage of various educational icons. These include mathematical symbols like a square root of 2, a pi symbol, and a percent sign; scientific symbols like a DNA helix, a lightbulb, and a calculator; and social icons like a group of people, a handshake, and a puzzle piece. There are also icons representing a globe, a play button, a bar chart, and a compass.

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