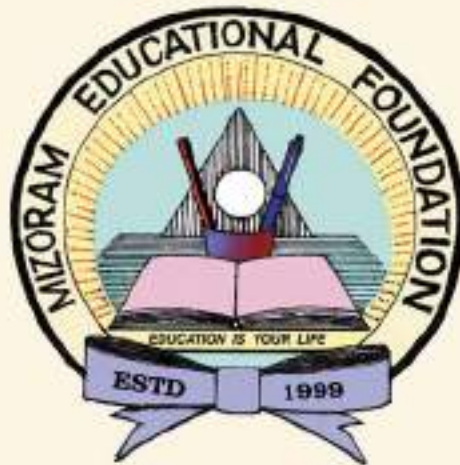


Mizoram Educational Journal

(A National Refereed Journal)



Vol. XII, Issue 3, September, 2026

ISSN(P): 2395-731 X
ISSN (O): 3139-9541

Mizoram Educational Journal

(A National Refereed Journal)

Chief Editor : Prof. Lynda Zohmingliani

Editor: Dr. Mary L. Renthlei

Vol. XII, Issue 3, September, 2026

Published by

Prof. Lalbiakdiki Hnamte

on behalf of

The Mizoram Educational Foundation.

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From the Chief Editor's Desk

Mizoram Educational Journal has once again managed to bring the September issue for 2026. The present issue has twelve articles, some of them conceptual but most of them research based with interesting findings.

Rosie Vanlalruati examined the complex sociological drivers dictating entry into the informal domestic labour sector in Aizawl, Mizoram. This paper has demonstrated how the “family-like” recruitment of young, uneducated rural women facilitates a distinct form of structural labour stratification. The findings indicate that while the sector’s extreme informality acts as an immediate “open door” for rural youth fleeing subsistence poverty, it ultimately functions as a mechanism of long-term economic entrapment—bypassing professional labour standards, limiting upward socio-economic mobility, and reinforcing gendered inequality within the urban environment.

Smaranika Samal, Ishita Mishra and Dipanshu Sharma examined how student-led activism can advance the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and position youth as integral participants in the future, rather than recipients. The Activism-SDG Nexus model explains how inputs (education, mobilisation) lead to collective action that results in policy influence, and how feedback loops identify pathways to achieve this by empowering people through iterative empowerment. The paper stresses that despite obstacles such as structural inequalities and scalability challenges, youth activism redefines the implementation of the SDGs as dialogic and youth-focused, thereby adding moral urgency and transformative agency to sustainability.

Mikael L. Chuaungo studied the conceptual foundations of blended and hybrid learning and explores how GenAI is redefining these instructional approaches. The paper contends that the effective integration of GenAI depends on balancing technological innovation with sound pedagogy, ethical governance, institutional readiness, and continuous professional development. It concludes that, when implemented responsibly, GenAI can contribute significantly to the development of inclusive, resilient, and future-ready higher education systems.

T.C Rakil Ramhmachhuani and explored the role of education in fostering life skills and enhancing mental health among undergraduate students in Mizoram. The findings highlight the impact of structured educational interventions on students’ ability to cope with stress, build healthy relationships, and maintain a balanced mental state. Emphasizing culturally relevant approaches, the study underscores the importance of educational programs that address the unique socio-cultural context of Mizoram. Ultimately, education emerges as a vital tool not only for academic achievement but also for holistic development, equipping

undergraduate students with the competencies necessary for mental health promotion and lifelong well-being.

Grace Kim Khaute and Zothangpuii tried to find out the attitude of adolescents towards sexuality and Healthy behaviours. For the study, a sample of 400 students belonging to ten different schools in Churachandpur district of Manipur was selected. A questionnaire to assess the attitude of adolescents relating to sexuality and healthy behaviours constructed by the investigators was used for data collection. The study revealed that irrespective of their gender a high percentage of adolescents have positive attitude towards sexuality and engaging in healthy behaviours.

Ramdinmawia and J. Lalhriatpuii conducted a study aimed to find out and compare attitude towards sex education among youths and elders in different church denominations in Aizawl city. The sample consisted of 5 females and 5 male youths from each denomination and 3 elders from each denomination (7 church denominations) respectively. The study revealed positive attitude towards sex education among church members, regardless of gender. Younger members were open to learning about it, indicating growing awareness and changing societal perspectives. Elders of other churches also had a generally positive outlook, with no significant opposition. This suggests a shift from traditional resistance to a more tolerant attitude, possibly due to contemporary issues, health consciousness, and better educational initiatives. This suggests sex education is becoming a more common topic in churches.

Pooja Roy and Elizabeth Hangsing studied English language proficiency among secondary school students in the Chümoukedima District of Nagaland, with specific comparisons based on gender, locality, and type of school. A sample of 200 secondary school students were selected from various schools of Chümoukedima district through simple random sampling technique. The findings revealed significant differences in English language proficiency with regard to gender, where females performed significantly better than males leading to the rejection of the null hypothesis. The findings suggest the need for improving English language teaching practices, especially in government schools, and providing equal academic support to enhance proficiency levels among all secondary school students.

K. Lalnunsiami and Pramod Kumar N. worked on the methods used to promote HOT, such as inquiry-based learning (IBL), problem-based learning (PBL), flipped classrooms, authentic assessments, and technology integration. The findings called for curriculum reforms and faculty development at HEIs to bring in HOT to better adapt students to the HEI system to maximise their academic and professional performances.

Jacob Lalrinawma and F.VL. Malsawmdawngliani examined the transition from special education to inclusive education in Mizoram and Meghalaya, asking how far conversion has

gone and how ready the institutions are to complete it. Of Meghalaya's 9 recognised special schools, 5 (55.6%) had ceased to function as such by the time of data collection, whereas all 8 of Mizoram's remained unchanged. Since both states received an identical mandate simultaneously, the divergence appears to be associated with differences in financing and governance rather than with the national policy itself. A phased transition framework towards inclusion is proposed by the researchers based on their findings.

Lallawmpuii, R. Lalhmingangi and R. Lalthankhumi examined the moral values of middle school students in Aizawl City, focusing on differences based on gender and type of school management. The findings revealed that a majority of students possess high moral values. Female students exhibited higher moral values than male students. These findings underscored the importance of targeted efforts by teachers, parents, and policymakers to reinforce moral education, especially among boys and government school students

Vansangpuii and F. Lalrinzuali explored postgraduate students' perception on assessment practices at Mizoram University, evaluating their perceptions regarding fairness, effectiveness, feedback quality, transparency and alignment with course objectives. Their research findings highlight gaps in the effective integration of ICT-based assessments and inconsistent transparency in communicating grading criteria and internal marks. The study recommends diversifying evaluation methods, standardizing rubric transparency, enhancing digital assessment infrastructure and institutionalizing continuous, dialogic feedback loops in alignment with the competency-based frameworks envisioned by the National Education Policy (NEP) 2020.

Lalthianglimi and Lalrintluangi assessed the level of stress among women teachers. A descriptive comparative research design was adopted in which the study sample comprised of 83 women teachers of Mizoram. Data were collected using "Women Teachers' Stress scale" which revealed that most women teachers experienced a moderate level of stress. The findings highlight the need for regular stress management programs, supportive work environments, and strategies to promote the psychological well-being of women teachers.

Thus, all of these articles have their own value and significance in that they have managed to stress on the richness of education and its multidisciplinary nature. The journal wishes all a happy and enlightening reading once again.

Lynda Zohmingliani

Empowering Tomorrow's Guardians: The Impact of Student-Led Activism on Achieving UN Sustainable Development Goals

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Abstract

This theoretical paper examines how student-led activism can advance the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and position youth as integral participants in the future, rather than recipients. It integrates the actions of the marginalized through activism (SDG 10), systematic change by praxis-based education (SDG 4 and SDG 12), and cross-national collaboration (SDG 17), as it is based on social movement theory (resource mobilization and framing), critical pedagogy (Freire), intergenerational justice (Rawls extended), ecological citizenship, and cosmopolitanism (Beck). The Activism-SDG Nexus model explains how inputs (education, mobilisation) lead to collective action that results in policy influence, and how feedback loops identify pathways to achieve this by empowering people through iterative empowerment. Nevertheless, despite obstacles such as structural inequalities and scalability challenges, youth activism redefines the implementation of the SDGs as dialogic and youth-focused, thereby adding moral urgency and transformative agency to sustainability.

Keywords: youth activism, student voice, UN SDGs, empowerment theory, intergenerational justice, and critical pedagogy.

Introduction

The urgency of the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) stems from their adoption as a global agenda in 2015 to address interrelated challenges, including poverty, inequality, climate change, and environmental degradation. On 25 September 2015, United Nations Member States unanimously adopted the Transforming our world: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, which comprises 17 SDGs and 169 targets, with the United Nations expecting them to be achieved by 2030 (United Nations, 2015). This agenda is a radical roadmap for people, planet, and prosperity that underscores that sustainable development must be achieved through an urgent, collective effort to eradicate poverty, safeguard the environment, and guarantee peace and justice to all

(United Nations, n.d.a). The SDGs are based on the Millennium Development Goals but extend to encompass universality, a whole-person approach, and a firm commitment to leaving no one behind (United Nations, 2015).

The urgency at the global scale is heightened by growing evidence that planetary boundaries are being crossed, including rapid climate change, biodiversity loss, and resource depletion, which pose a threat to long-term human well-being. According to progress reports, many targets, including those related to education, hunger, and climate action, are at risk of being overdue without accelerated action, with the most vulnerable population groups disproportionately affected, including children and youth (United Nations, n.d.b). The future generation bears disproportionate weight, as present generations will impose escalating environmental, social, and economic costs on it through decisions about emissions, resource use, and policy inaction. The central element in sustainability discussions has been intergenerational inequity, whereby current actions must protect the rights and opportunities of future generations (United Nations, 2015; see also the intergenerational equity discussion in the sustainability context).

The youth are portrayed here as the world's future custodians, casting them not as passive observers of a fallen world but as active participants responsible for caring for the planet. Such framing emphasises their vested interest in the sustainability outcomes since they will be the inheritors and dwellers on the long-term results of current environmental and developmental paths. Youth are seen as guardians because they promote intergenerational justice, meaning that resources, ecosystems, and opportunities are maintained in ways that are just for future generations, and they also take responsibility for creating avenues to resilience and equity (United Nations, n.d.c).

In the past, the role of the youths in international issues has been modified to allow active involvement. Previous environmental movements tended to regard youth as either beneficiaries of adult decisions or as future stakeholders who require education. Nonetheless, modern patterns demonstrate a deep shift: young people are currently in the vanguard of grassroots movements, utilising digital means and pressurising institutions. Such evolution is also reflected in the Fridays for Future movement, in which students reforming all over the world are demanding bold climate policies, and they refuse to be tokenistically incorporated into the world order but gain influence through real action (see youth activism literature on agency reorientation). This proactive role reinvigorates youth as agents who will co-create sustainable futures, rather than as dependents, and disrupts established power structures, demonstrating their capacity for innovation and ethical urgency in addressing systemic problems.

Research Problem and Objectives

The overarching research question guiding this theoretical paper is: How does student-led activism, in theory, contribute to the realisation of the UN Sustainable Development Goals? Although the concept of youth agency is increasingly being talked about in sustainability circles, little theoretical effort has been devoted to how the three foundations of activism, namely mobilisation, framing and empowerment fit and work in tandem in SDG implementation other than through empirical case studies.

These goals are tri-faceted and they are: (1) to examine the inception of social movement theory, empowerment theories and models of agency to provide theoretical underpinnings of youth activism; (2) to chart the conceptual correspondence between student-led activism and SDGs, especially those related to education (SDG 4), climate action (SDG 13), reduced inequalities (SDG 10), and partnerships (SDG 17); and (3) to present a conceptual model that explains pathways of empowerment of how activism can make a transform.

Scope and Theoretical Nature

The present paper adopts a purely theoretical orientation and synthesises existing theories and conceptual literature, drawing on no primary empirical data or fieldwork. It aims at analysing concepts in order to explain mechanisms of influence, and value abstraction and integration, rather than descriptive case evidence.

Other important terms include: Student-led activism. This can be defined as the collective action initiated and facilitated by students or young people, most often within learning institutions, intended to mobilise social, environmental, or policy change related to sustainability. Empowerment refers to practices that enable individuals or groups to take charge of their circumstances through critical awareness, agency, and participatory action (inspired by critical pedagogy and related frameworks). SDGs are the 17 integrated targets set out in the 2030 Agenda and serve as a global roadmap for sustainable development (United Nations, 2015).

The research methodology will be conceptual analysis and a literature review: an analysis of key theoretical literature on social movements, youth involvement, intergenerational justice, and sustainability education to develop coherent arguments and a new model.

Literature Review

These developments in the history of youth activism in the sustainability area are reflected in a gradual shift from individual participation in larger social movements to more structured, youth-led global campaigns. With the publication of *Silent Spring* (1962) by environmentalist Rachel Carson, which revealed the risks of pesticides, and the subsequent protests of young people against pollution, industrialisation, and countercultural movements in the 1960s, awareness of the environment was on the rise (Carson, as cited in historical reviews; see also BBC Future, 2020). Celebrated in 1970 because of student-led teach-ins, the first Earth Day attracted millions of individuals and made young people a key participant in early environmentalism, as events such as the Cuyahoga River fire and the Santa Barbara oil spill inspired it (History.com, 2020). During this period, environmental issues were associated with civil rights and anti-war movements, and youth formed coalitions and groups, such as Greenpeace.

Activism gave rise to new social movements in the late 20th century that focused on identity, culture, and post-materialist values rather than conventional class struggles (Melucci, 1989). In the theory of new social movements, Alberto Melucci says that actions are symbolic, which is aimed to engage lifestyle shift and identity among groups of people, particularly in ecology, peace, and youth movements, where the participants develop their own meanings opposing the mainstream structures (Melucci, 1996). This model explains how there has been a transition to decentralised, value-based environmental campaigns.

The activism of modern youths reached its zenith with Fridays for Future, the school strike instigated by Greta Thunberg in 2018 that rapidly became widespread with a need to alter the system in accordance with the SDGs (The Conversation, 2020; Council on Foreign Relations, 2025). This movement is also based on the previous experiences and is using digital means to mobilise across international borders. Deliberative democracy has been advanced by figures such as Jürgen Habermas, who argue that sustainable decisions can be justified through rational debate among the masses in inclusive forums and that agreement can be reached on questions of sustainability (Habermas, as used in activist critiques; Young, 2001).

Theoretical Approaches to the Student voice and Empowerment.

The theory of empowerment, particularly Paulo Freire's *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* (1970/2018), provides a theoretical foundation for studying student voice in sustainability activism. Freire opposes bank-like education, in which knowledge is sent to already passive students, and promotes problem-posing education, praxis: critical pedagogy and action (Freire, 2018). In the context of environmental education, this supports *conscientização* (critical consciousness), enabling youth to understand oppression in ecological degradation and to take action, as in the case of youth-led climate movements' view of activism as liberatory pedagogy (Hennessy, 2024; Spínola, 2023).

Student agency and voice are also theorised using Roger Hart's (1992) Ladder of Children's Participation, which consists of eight rungs with non-participation (manipulation, decoration) at the lowest end and real participation at the highest end. The upper levels consist of child action, which is shared with adults (rung 8), and child-initiated initiatives (rung 7), which encourage real empowerment rather than tokenism (Hart, 1992/1997). This model critiques the superficial inclusion of youth in sustainability policies and suggests shared decision-making in environmental projects to enhance agency and democratic citizenship (Hart, as cited in UNICEF publications).

Such views highlight the way student voice has become more than a peripheral actor to a stronger one, leading to sustainability based on critical cognisance and participatory systems.

Intersections with UN SDGs

Several Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) directly overlap with youth activism, such as SDG 4 (Quality Education), which emphasises inclusive and equitable education that enables lifelong learning, including civic engagement and critical awareness (United Nations, 2015). SDG 13 (Climate Action) requires immediate action to address climate change, as youth-led movements intensify the need for mitigation and adaptation policies. SDG 17 (Partnerships for the Goals) encourages multi-stakeholder partnerships, which make youth a key stakeholder in global sustainability work (United Nations, n.d.a).

Regardless of these alignments, the SDG framework is criticised for having a lack of focus on youth agency. Although the 2030 Agenda recognises youth as key drivers of change (United Nations, 2015), implementation serves mostly tokenism, which is a mere presence but lacks actual impact, instead of transformative energy, as the core of giving them the power to make actual decisions (United Nations, 2021; see also UNESCO, 2026). This distance maintains shallow participation that cannot affect change in the system, which is why systems require mechanisms that guarantee meaningful and responsible participation beyond rhetoric.

Theoretical Framework:

Basic Theories of Student-Led Activism

The social movement theory provides valuable answers on how student-led activism functions, especially in the mobilisation of resources and framing. Resource mobilisation theory is based on the notion that successful movements are those which are resource accumulative (of time, skills, networks, and digital resources) and resource mobilising (as opposed to emerging as a result of grievances) (McCarthy and Zald, 1977). Students create education, social media, and peer networks to increase the effects of youth climate movements like Fridays for Future, which makes the resources at the individual level significant by the effect of a large network of people (Jenkins, 1983). This is further supplemented by the processes of framing through which issues are perceived and framed to provide support. Activists build urgent discourses of climate injustice using diagnostic (problem

identification), prognostic (suggestion of solutions), and motivational framing, such as Fridays for Future, which focus on systemic change and intergenerational equity (Svensson and Wahlström, 2021; Buzogany, 2022).

Youth activism is further grounded in ecological citizenship and intergenerational justice. Ecological citizenship extends beyond civic duty to environmental vigilance, which expects individuals to take action beyond national boundaries in the best interests of the planet. The concept of intergenerational justice is based on the veil of ignorance of John Rawls and assumes that all decision-makers might not know what generation they belong to, resulting in a set of principles that ensure the future generations can use the available resources and a livable environment (Rawls, 1999, extended to the context of sustainability; Welburn, 2013). This extension is a critique of the current-day exploitation where the youth are being placed as the representatives of the now, who require equal allocation of time, which would be in line with the long-term sustainability requirements of the activism.

Conceptual Model: The Activism-SDG Nexus

In this paper, I propose a theoretical framework, the Activism-SDG Nexus, that identifies avenues for mobilising student activism toward SDG deliverables. These inputs can be education (critical awareness through SDG 4) and mobilisation (networks and framing). Actions involve mass mobilisation (protests and online campaigns) and deliberative action (communication with institutions). The outputs include policy action (e.g., strengthened climate commitments under SDG 13) and collaboration (SDG 17). The feedback loops represent the activation of institutional responses that strengthen or limit activism and shape loop changes in terms of empowerment. (See figure as flow chart: the inputs go to the processes, the processes go to the outputs, the outputs go to the feedback to the inputs, both way arrows to demonstrate the mutual reinforcement.

Barriers and Enablers A Theoretical Analysis

Structural inequalities are a hindrance, which is conceptualised as the cultural capital introduced by Bourdieu, where access to knowledge, networks, and symbolic resources is uneven and restricts the participation of the marginalised youth (Bourdieu, 1986, as applied in activism studies; Alexander, 2022). Digital affordances are enablers in the network society theory by Castells, in which horizontal and decentralised networks promote fast mobilisation, self-control, and counter-power against hierarchies (Castells, 2015). Virality and connectivity around the world have become possible through social media, and young people have been empowered to circumvent the traditional gatekeepers in climate movements.

Theoretical Analysis: Mechanism of Impact

Individuals who are marginalized need to be amplified so that they can have inclusive SDGs. Student activism contributes to equity, as indicated in SDG 10 (Reduced Inequalities) by adopting narrative theory and counter-hegemonic narratives to unify the prevailing power systems. Youth activists are building the alternative narratives of climate crises through diagnostic, prognostic, and motivational framing, which focus on marginalised voices, especially those of Global South, Indigenous, and low-income communities, revealing the imbalance of the vulnerable in the face of climate crises (Neas, S., Ward, A., & Bowman, B. 2022). These stories interfere with the mainstream environmental discourses that emphasise technocratic or neoliberal fixes in favour of subaltern environmentalism based on lived experiences of domination and positionality.

These counter-hegemonic behaviours, which are evident in global health and climate activities, create collective agency through the production of knowledge that challenges neoliberal individualism and creates cross-border solidarity (Musolino, C., Baum, F., Freeman, T., Labonté, R., Bodini, C., & Sanders, D. 2020). Activism is able to generate a set of inclusive routes to SDG 10 goals by making individual accounts of experience visible and collective as political statements, so that sustainability results correspond to intersectional inequalities and not their reproduction.

Facilitating Systemic Transformation through Educational Integration

Critical pedagogy conceptualises curriculum change as a strategy to instill activism, and the idea of changing banking education to praxis-focused education incorporating reflection and transformative action (Freire, 2018). The reform efforts in the field indicate that integrating education on sustainability (EfS) into the existing curricular programs, through collaborative autoethnography and interdisciplinary education, provides students with skills in civic action and a critique of the entire system (Wrobel, A., Beasy, K., Fiedler, T., Mann, A., Morrison, B., Towle, N., Wood, G., Doyle, R., Peterson, C., & Bettiol, S., 2026).

This directly aids SDG 4 (Quality Education, Target 4.7) by popularizing sustainable development knowledge and global citizenship. It also has an overlapping connection with SDG 12 (Responsible Consumption and Production, Target 12.8) by creating awareness of sustainable ways of living and lifestyles and making the classroom a place of activism where young people question the systems of consumption and become agents of behavioural and policy change.

Developing International Relationships and Scalability

Transnational youth networks reflect the theory of cosmopolitanism that allows approach to cosmopolitanisation, the acts of local people are linked to the world risk communities (Beck and Sznaider, 2006). The framework presented by Beck also emphasizes the role played by youth who extend methodological nationalism and create solidarities that are fluid and borderless (e.g. through digital platforms) which reinforce SDG 17 (Partnerships for the Goals).

Scalability challenge, however, is facing decentralised activism. The dynamics of network society enable the quick mobilisation at the expense of fragmentation, short-lived momentum, and unequal influence as horizontal structures are not able to maintain pressure on institutional hierarchies (Castells, 2015). The activism-policy feedback mechanisms are weak unless they have structures in place formalizing the translation of global visibility into long-term, scalable effects.

Discussion and Implications:

Theoretical Insights Synthesis

The theoretical discussion shows that activism led by students transforms the SDG implementation in principle as a dialogic and youth-centered process. With the incorporation of the social movement theory, the realization of critical pedagogy, and the intergenerational justice models, activism transforms the SDGs implementation process into the top-down, technocratic models of SDGs implementation to the communicative action, which is inclusive. Youth activism supports deliberative spaces enabling the marginalized voices to counter the hegemonic narratives supporting equity (SDG 10) using counter-hegemonic discourses and narrative rebuilding (Neas et al., 2022). Activism triggers systemic change by implementing praxis-oriented learning, and it fits SDG 4 and SDG 12 since it brings understanding of critical consciousness and responsible consumption (Freire, 2018; Hennessy, 2024). Transnational networks represent cosmopolitanism, which strengthens partnership (SDG 17),

and presents scalability contradictions in decentralized forms (Castells, 2015; Beck and Sznaider, 2006). Together, these processes help to place youth not as future beneficiaries but as current co-producers of sustainability and make SDGs more of an interactive and intergenerational conversation that focuses more on agency, justice, and efficacy rather than accepting instructions.

Educational and Policy Recommendations

In theory, youth forums and participatory mechanisms, including binding youth quotas in climate and development councils, should be institutionalized by policy-makers in order to have substantive, not tokenistic, inclusion (United Nations, 2021). This institutional embeddedness leads to meaningful interaction, which covers structural remaining and involves intergenerational equity in SDG localization. Teachers are encouraged to implement the models of experiential learning based on critical pedagogy and incorporate the practice of activism into the curricula via dialogic meetings, teach-ins, and community projects where they develop the skills of organizing, advocacy, and justice-oriented action (Trott, 2023; Kowasch, M., Oettel, A., Bauer, S., & Lapin, K. 2021). These can make schools locations of environmental citizenship and prepare students to make transformational contributions to SDGs

Limitations and Future Directions

The theoretical synthesis of this paper has its own biases, one of them being a Western-centric approach that prevails in most social movement and empowerment literature, which may be biased against other epistemologies of the Global South and underserved groups (Neas et al., 2022). The use of conceptual abstraction restrains a contextual sensitivity that lacks empirical support. The next steps should be empirical extensions by longitudinal case studies of the Activism-SDG Nexus model under different socio-cultural situations, especially in non-Western communities, to confirm the pathways and overcome biases. The inclusion of youth voices in mixed-method research would further enhance the model, making it more theory-to-practice aligned to carry out its development in a more inclusive manner.

Conclusion

This theoretical discussion highlights the revolutionary power of student activism as an urgent necessity in the proper implementation of the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Quite to the opposite, youth as a core participant in the SDG process, through their self-organised actions, critical framing, and transnational solidarity, reconfigure the SDG process as dialogic, intergenerational, and youth-centred. Based on the social movement theory, critical pedagogy, ecological citizenship, and cosmopolitanism, the analysis shows that student activism functions in a variety of ways: marginalized voices are amplified to promote equity (SDG 10), systemic change becomes possible through praxis-oriented educational reform (SDG 4 and SDG 12), and global partnerships can be scaled, despite structural and decentralisation issues (SDG 17).

The Activism-SDG Nexus model describes the way the inputs of critical awareness and mobilisation can be transmitted through collective action and deliberative interactions to generate the actual policy impact and institutional feedback loops. Such avenues place young people not only as future heirs to the delivery of sustainability, but also as partners in the ongoing construction of the current shift to planetary justice. Student-led activism, hegemonically disrupted, entrenched with transformative learning, and developing borderless networks, helps to create moral urgency, innovativeness, and democratic legitimacy to SDG processes that would otherwise stagnate with traditional top-down strategies.

Finally, empowerment of the youth nowadays is a moral and strategic requirement. This makes students empowered custodians when they are identified as legitimate agents who are now

institutionalised through forums, curriculum integration, and meaningful roles in decision-making and can close the generational divides and speed up the process toward the 2030 Agenda. The theoretical insights integrated in this paper confirm the idea that the issue of youth voice and agency is not an additional improvement but a core necessity of sustainable development. Youth empowerment is a guarantee of sustainable guardianship in the future, which guarantees a vibrant, just, and liveable world to all future generations.

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An Open Door of Informality: Age, Educational Stratification and Labour Entry in Aizawl's Domestic Sector

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Abstract

This research examines the complex sociological drivers dictating entry into the informal domestic labour sector in Aizawl, Mizoram. Focusing on the structural intersection of youth, limited educational attainment, and low-barrier entry pathways, the paper explores how informal economies absorb marginalized labour forces. Utilizing a mixed-methods empirical design with a sample of 226 domestic workers, the study addresses a critical gap in Northeast Indian labour literature: the systemic absence of state enumeration, statistical recording, and regulatory oversight that renders domestic labour economically and socially invisible. Drawing upon Viviana Zelizer's (2005) Relational Work framework alongside classic Labour Stratification Theory, this paper demonstrates how the "family-like" recruitment of young, uneducated rural women facilitates a distinct form of structural labour stratification. The findings indicate that while the sector's extreme informality acts as an immediate "open door" for rural youth fleeing subsistence poverty, it ultimately functions as a mechanism of long-term economic entrapment—bypassing professional labour standards, limiting upward socio-economic mobility, and reinforcing gendered inequality within the urban environment.

Keywords: Labour Stratification, Relational Work, Informal Sector, Age Demography, Educational Qualification, Easy Entry, Fictive Kinship

Introduction

In the rapidly expanding urban landscape of Aizawl, the capital city of Mizoram, domestic work functions as a quintessential "open-door" sector. Unlike formal employment—which demands verified institutional credentials, specialized technical skill sets, and formal contractual agreements—domestic labour offers an entry point into the urban cash economy that remains largely unrecognized, unenumerated, and unregulated by state frameworks. This ease of entry is not merely an incidental or temporary feature of a developing economy; rather, it is a primary symptom of the sector's deep, institutionalized informality.

Because domestic tasks such as cleaning, cooking, child minding, and eldercare are culturally naturalized as mere extensions of "inherent" female domesticity, they routinely bypass statutory labour protections, minimum wage mandates, and standardized employment frameworks. This dynamic generates a structural environment where worker vulnerability is both sustained and normalized inside the private, unmonitored domestic sphere.

The socio-economic landscape of contemporary Mizoram presents a deeply compelling field for analysing these informal labour dynamics. As rural-to-urban migration accelerates across the state's mountain districts toward Aizawl, young women with limited formal education seek viable

livelihoods in the urban centre. The informal domestic sector becomes their primary point of structural absorption.

However, this “open door” operates with a fundamental dual character. On the one hand, it provides immediate, low-barrier employment and shelter for structurally disadvantaged youth who lack alternative capital. On the other hand, it establishes an environment of long-term economic vulnerability. By relying on informal, word-of-mouth recruitment, village networks, and church connections, the domestic labour market blurs the boundary between social care and commodified labour, making wage negotiation and rights advocacy exceptionally challenging.

Theoretical Framework: Relational Work, Indigenous Ethics, and Stratification

To conceptualize both the entry mechanisms and the ongoing structural stratification within Aizawl’s domestic workforce, this study synthesizes Viviana Zelizer’s (2005) concept of Relational Work with broader Labour Stratification Theory and local socio-cultural frameworks.

Zelizer’s Relational Work in the Domestic Sphere

Zelizer refutes the traditional binary that sharply separates pure economic activity from intimate personal relations. Rather than viewing money and personal ties as “hostile worlds,” Zelizer argues that individuals continuously perform relational work—creating, negotiating, and transforming meaningful social ties alongside monetary transactions. In the domestic labour market, economic exchanges are rarely executed through clinical, arms-length market contacts. Instead, they are deeply embedded in relational language where workers are framed as “family-like” dependents, younger sisters, or foster daughters rather than formal wage-earning employees.

In the Mizo context, this relational dynamic is mediated by the indigenous code of Tlawmngaihna—a celebrated ethic that dictates a person must be self-sacrificing, hospitable, courteous, and always ready to assist others without demanding individual return or financial recognition. When an employer hires an awmpui (domestic worker) into the household, the employment relation is frequently articulated through fictive kinship terms. Live-in workers or riak are routinely addressed as Bawihthe/Mate (dear) or Naute (child), as evident in Table 1.

While this linguistic and social integration offers undeniable real-world benefits—such as housing, physical protection, shared family meals, and emotional integration—Zelizer’s framework reveals the underlying structural cost: when economic transactions are thoroughly wrapped in the language of affection, moral duty, and familial obligation, negotiating precise working hours, requesting statutory wage increases, or demanding formal days off becomes culturally taboo and socially risky for the worker.

Table 1
Relational Work Mechanism

Stage	Process / Component
1. Underlying Norms	Cultural Value (Tlawmngaihna) + Fictive Kinship (Bawihthe/Naute/Mate)
2. Intermediate Effect	De-commodification of Manual Effort
3. Structural Outcome	Negotiation Bottlenecks (Invisible Overwork & Stagnant Wages)

Labour Stratification and the Informal Sector

Complementing Relational Work theory, Labour Stratification Theory provides the structural lens required to understand why certain demographic segments remain locked in lower-tier informal occupations. The labour market is not a single, fluid arena; it is deeply segmented into primary and secondary circuits. The primary circuit offers high wages, job security, formal contracts, and institutional mobility. The secondary circuit—where domestic work unequivocally resides—is characterized by low wages, absent career ladders, arbitrary management, and an utter lack of social security.

In Aizawl, this segmentation is strongly governed by two intersecting demographic vectors: age and educational attainment. When young rural migrants enter the urban economy without completing basic secondary education, their structural lack of credentials creates an immediate institutional bottleneck. The informal domestic sector functions as the path of least resistance. However, because the skills developed within domestic work are culturally devalued as “natural female instincts” rather than technical competencies, time spent in the sector rarely translates into transferable human capital. Thus, the “open door” that facilitates early entry gradually converts into a structural ceiling that locks workers into lifelong economic informality.

Methodology and Contextual Setting

This paper draws upon a comprehensive mixed-methods research design aimed at uncovering both the quantifiable demographic metrics and the lived qualitative experiences of domestic workers (*riak* and *lang*) in urban Mizoram.

The Urban Context: Aizawl

Aizawl serves as the economic, political, and cultural hub of Mizoram, experiencing rapid urban growth over recent decades. This urban expansion has generated a growing middle class comprising state government employees, educators, business owners, and healthcare professionals. The rise of dual-income urban households has heightened the demand for domestic labour to manage

housekeeping, food preparation, and caregiving duties. Simultaneously, economic distress, limited agricultural returns from shifting cultivation (jhum), and under-resourced educational infrastructure in rural districts drive a steady stream of young women toward the capital.

Sampling and Data Collection Design

Because domestic workers represent an unlisted, hidden, and unenumerated population, probability sampling methods are unviable. Consequently, this study employed a combination of purposive and snowball sampling strategies across several municipal wards in Aizawl (including high-density, middle-income, and commercial localities such as Mission Veng, Dawrpui, Khatla, and Vaivakawn).

- **Quantitative Component:** A structured survey schedule was administered to 226 active women domestic workers. The instrument captured metrics regarding age of entry, educational background, village of origin, migration history, monthly remuneration, daily working hours, contract types, and access to healthcare and education.
- **Qualitative Component:** To complement the survey data, 30 semi-structured, in-depth interviews were conducted with a sub-sample of domestic workers, along with 15 key-informant interviews with employers and local community leaders (YMAAs and MHIP representatives). These qualitative interviews focused on recruitment narratives, daily household dynamics, power negotiations, and subjective aspirations for upward mobility.

Empirical Findings and Detailed Analysis

Age Demography and the Early Entry Pathway

The empirical data collected across the sample illustrates a pronounced concentration of young workers entering the domestic sector during critical developmental years.

Table 2
Age Demography at Sector Entry

Age Group	Percentage (%)
Less than 18 years	34.5%
18–25 years	48.2%
26–35 years	11.8%
Greater than 35 years	5.5%

The quantitative distribution, as detailed in Table 2 reveals that 82.7% of respondents entered the domestic labour market before reaching 25 years of age. Most notably, 34.5% entered as minors under the age of 18. Field narratives indicate that early entry is overwhelmingly driven by household

economic crises in rural villages, such as the sudden illness of a breadwinner, crop failures, or parental separation.

When a family faces acute financial distress, young female children are frequently withdrawn from school and placed into urban households through extended kinship networks. The host household offers shelter, food, and a modest monthly stipend sent directly to the rural parents, framing the child’s employment as a protective foster-care arrangement rather than formal child labour.

Educational Stratification and the Credential Trap

The educational profile of the surveyed domestic workers underlines the profound structural barrier that prevents their participation in the formal labour market.

Table 3
Educational Attainment of Sample Population

Education Level	Percentage (%)	Cumulative (%)
No Formal Education	21.2%	21.2%
Primary School (1–5)	42.5%	63.7%
Middle School (6–8)	26.1%	89.8%
High School / Above	10.2%	100.0%

A striking 63.7% of the respondents possess only a primary school education or no formal schooling whatsoever, while less than 11% have completed high school, as shown in Table 3. In a state like Mizoram, which boasts high literacy rates, this educational deficit creates severe occupational isolation. Modern formal sector employment in Aizawl—such as clerical work, formal retail, or government services—requires recognized secondary or tertiary educational certificates.

The structural absence of these credentials acts as an absolute barrier. Consequently, the domestic sector’s “open door”—which requires no formal certificates or prior technical qualifications—becomes the only viable point of entry into the urban monetized economy for these young women.

Recruitment Pathways and the Mechanics of Informality

The empirical research investigated the precise mechanisms through which workers gain entry into Aizawl households, which is illustrated in Table 4. The findings confirm that market-based commercial agencies play an almost negligible role in Mizoram’s domestic sector. Instead, recruitment operates through informal, highly personalized channels.

Table 4
Recruitment Pathways into Domestic Sector

Recruitment Channel	Percentage (%)
Rural Relatives / Family Ties	52.4%
Village Neighbours / Friends	28.3%
Church Networks (YMA / MHIP) or Agents	14.2%
Direct Employer Approach	5.1%

Over 80% of workers secured their positions through personal, familial, or local village/community connections. This informal pipeline relies on social trust: urban employers contact rural relatives, village contacts or agents seeking a “reliable girl” (*rin tlak tur*) to manage household chores.

While this recruitment style minimizes transaction costs and provides rural families with a trusted environment for their daughters, it systematically eliminates formal contractual protections. Employment conditions are agreed upon through vague verbal promises rather than written contracts, leaving parameters like hours of work, specific duties, medical leave, and wage increments completely unstandardized.

Comparative Structural Analysis

To understand the distinct character of Aizawl’s informal domestic sector, it is useful to contrast its operational mechanics against both formal sector employment standards and the domestic labour frameworks observed in major Indian metropolises.

The unique paradox of the Aizawl context as compared to other regions across India highlights the fact that, unlike major metropolitan centres in mainland India—where domestic work is marked by rigid caste-based segregation, separate eating utensils, and physical distancing—the Mizo household exhibits remarkable spatial and social fluidity. Domestic workers routinely cook, eat, and reside alongside their employers in the same physical spaces, sharing meals and participating in family devotions.

However, this socio-spatial equality does not eliminate economic exploitation; rather, it transforms its nature. Because the worker is treated “like family,” her labour is de-commodified. Demanding overtime pay for working late into the evening during family visits or church functions feels culturally inappropriate. The warm relational environment effectively disguises intense physical and emotional labour, making the work structurally invisible.

Qualitative Case Studies: Lived Realities of Entrapment and Support

To ground these statistical trends in lived experience, the following qualitative case studies illustrate the dual character of the “open door” of informality.

Case Study 1: The Trap of Familial Obligation (Zari, Age 22)

Zari migrated to Aizawl from a remote village in Lawngtlai district at the age of 15 after her father passed away. Through an aunt, she was placed in a middle-class home in Aizawl as a live-in *awmpui* or *Riak*. For seven years, Zari has managed all daily cooking, washing, and cleaning. Her employer pays a modest monthly wage directly to her mother in the village to support her younger siblings’ schooling.

“My mistress is very kind to me,” Zari explains. “She buys me clothes for Christmas and takes me to church. But I work from 5:30 AM until 9:30 PM every day. I wanted to attend night school to finish my high school exams, but my mistress told me that if I go to school, there will be no one to cook the evening meal or make tea for visitors. I cannot argue because she has done so much for my family in the village. I feel trapped by her kindness.”

Zari’s experience illustrates how relational work and paternalistic care can restrict individual development. The employer’s genuine kindness and financial support for Zari’s family create a deep sense of moral obligation (*Tlawmngaihna*), making it virtually impossible for Zari to demand time for her own education or career growth.

Case Study 2: Educational Mentorship and Its Limits (Lalawmpuii, Age 19)

Lalawmpuii came to Aizawl at age 16 with no secondary education credentials. Her employer, a high school teacher in Mission Veng, agreed to take her in as a live-in worker on the explicit condition that Lalawmpuii would attend a local evening tutorial centre.

“My employer paid for my books and tuition fees,” Lalawmpuii says. “Every night after finishing the dinner dishes, I studied at the kitchen table. Last year, I passed my Class 10 exams. But now I want to find a job in a retail shop in the market. My employer is reluctant to let me leave because it is so hard to find a trustworthy girl to manage the kitchen. I am grateful for the education, but moving out into a real job is causing tension.”

This case highlights that even when employers actively support skill development, transitioning out of domestic work remains difficult. The employer’s reliance on informal, trusted labour creates resistance when the worker attempts to leverage her new qualifications in the formal market.

Discussion: The Structural Dialectic of Informal Domestic Labour

The empirical findings of this study demonstrate that the informal domestic labour market in Aizawl cannot be categorized through simple binaries of absolute exploitation versus benevolent egalitarianism. Instead, the sector operates as a complex structural dialectic, as illustrated in Table 5.

Table 5
The Structural Dialectic

Humanitarian Functions	Entrapment Dynamics
• Immediate shelter & income	• Unregulated working hours
• Protection for rural youth	• Stagnant, below-market wages
• Kinship integration & care	• Educational & career ceilings
• Shared physical lifestyle	• Invisible, naturalized labour

The Humanitarian Function of the “Open Door”

In an economy lacking state welfare programs or formal unemployment insurance, the informal domestic sector provides an essential social safety valve. For young rural women fleeing agricultural poverty, domestic work offers immediate shelter, nutritional security, physical protection in an unfamiliar city, and a steady income stream for rural dependents. The cultural framework of fictive kinship protects these young women from the extreme social alienation, urban isolation, and caste-based discrimination often documented in larger metropolitan centres across South Asia.

The Mechanics of Entrapment

Conversely, this exact same informal structure functions as an institutionalized trap. The absence of state enumeration and regulatory oversight means that domestic workers remain invisible in official labour statistics. Because entry requires no formal education, the sector attracts those with severe educational deficits.

Once absorbed, the combination of long working hours, spatial isolation within modern enclosed kitchens, and the moral obligation to display selfless service (*Tlawmngaihna*) prevents workers from acquiring formal credentials or technical skills. Consequently, domestic work becomes a self-perpetuating occupational trap. The “open door” that welcomes young women into urban households eventually closes behind them, restricting their long-term economic mobility.

Conclusion and Actionable Policy Recommendations

This research has demonstrated that while the informal domestic labour sector in Aizawl provides vital livelihood opportunities for young, uneducated rural women, its deep informality reinforces systemic labour stratification and economic vulnerability. To transform this sector into an equitable, professional, and empowering space without dismantling the supportive social ties unique to Mizo culture, structural policy interventions are urgently required.

Table 6
Framework for Policy Reform

Policy Pillar	Key Reform Initiatives
Municipal Registration	• Official AMC Database • Identity Cards
Educational Mobility	• Night School Frameworks • Vocational Grants
Labour Rights	• Standardized Contracts • Minimum Wage Baselines

Official Enumeration and Municipal Registration

The state must eliminate the statistical invisibility of domestic workers. The Aizawl Municipal Corporation (AMC), in collaboration with Local Council Committees (LCCs), should establish a municipal registration database. Registering domestic workers and issuing official worker identity cards would provide baseline enumeration, enabling workers to access state welfare schemes, healthcare benefits, and legal redress when disputes arise.

Standardized Contractual Guidelines and Baseline Protections

Recognizing the unique relational nature of the Mizo home, full-scale industrial labour laws may be challenging to enforce. However, the state government—through the Department of Labour, Employment, Skill Development & Entrepreneurship (LESDE)—should formulate tailored, standardized guidelines for domestic employment. These should include:

- A clearly defined baseline for minimum monthly compensation.
- Mandatory guidelines for rest periods (e.g., eight hours of uninterrupted night rest and at least one full day off per week).
- Clear boundaries defining standard domestic duties to prevent overwork.

Flexible Educational and Vocational Pathways

To break the cycle of educational stratification, civil society organizations—most notably the Young Mizo Association (YMA), the Mizo Hmeichhe Insuihkhawm Pawl (MHIP), and local NGOs—should collaborate to establish flexible evening educational centres and skill-training workshops. Program schedules should accommodate domestic workers’ daily routines, offering functional literacy, secondary school completion courses, and vocational training (such as tailoring, computer skills, or formal healthcare assistance). Providing accessible educational upgrading ensures that domestic work can serve as a genuine stepping stone toward broader economic independence, rather than a permanent occupational trap.

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Reimagining Blended and Hybrid Learning in Higher Education: Opportunities and Challenges in the Age of Generative Artificial Intelligence

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Abstract

Generative Artificial Intelligence (GenAI) is reshaping higher education by expanding the possibilities of blended and hybrid learning. Its ability to support personalized instruction, intelligent tutoring, automated content creation, adaptive assessment, and accessible learning has introduced new opportunities for enhancing both teaching and learning. This paper examines the conceptual foundations of blended and hybrid learning and explores how GenAI is redefining these instructional approaches. It further analyses the pedagogical, ethical, and institutional challenges associated with GenAI, including issues of academic integrity, data privacy, algorithmic bias, faculty preparedness, and the digital divide. Particular attention is given to the Indian higher education context through an examination of the National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 and the initiatives of the University Grants Commission (UGC). The paper contends that the effective integration of GenAI depends on balancing technological innovation with sound pedagogy, ethical governance, institutional readiness, and continuous professional development. It concludes that, when implemented responsibly, GenAI can contribute significantly to the development of inclusive, resilient, and future-ready higher education systems.

Keywords: Generative Artificial Intelligence (GenAI); Blended Learning; Hybrid Learning; Higher Education; Educational Technology; NEP 2020

Introduction

The rapid advancement of digital technologies has profoundly influenced teaching and learning, transforming the ways in which knowledge is created, delivered, accessed, and assessed across educational settings. Although educational institutions had been integrating digital technologies into classroom practice for several years, the COVID-19 pandemic accelerated this transformation, compelling schools and universities worldwide to adopt online and technology-mediated instruction on an unprecedented scale (Hodges, C., Moore, S., Lockee, B., Trust, T., & Bond, A. 2020). In the post-pandemic era, blended and hybrid learning have emerged as sustainable instructional approaches that combine the strengths of face-to-face teaching with the flexibility and accessibility of digital learning environments (Garrison & Kanuka, 2004; Graham, 2006).

Advances in educational technology have further strengthened these learning models. Learning Management Systems (LMS), cloud-based collaboration platforms, mobile technologies, learning analytics, and adaptive learning systems have enabled more interactive, personalized, and

data-informed educational experiences (Bonk & Graham, 2006). More recently, the emergence of Generative Artificial Intelligence (GenAI) has introduced a new dimension to educational innovation. AI-powered applications such as ChatGPT, Google Gemini, Claude, and Microsoft Copilot are increasingly being used to generate instructional materials, provide personalized academic support, facilitate assessment, and assist educators with lesson planning and content development (Kasneci, E., Sessler, K., Küchemann, S., Bannert, M., Dementieva, D., Fischer, F., Gasser, U., Groh, G., Günnemann, S., Hüllermeier, E., Krusche, S., Kutyniok, G., Michaeli, T., Nerdel, C., Pfeffer, J., Poquet, O., Sailer, M., Schmidt, A., Seidel, T., Stadler, M., & Kasneci, G. 2023). As a result, GenAI is beginning to reshape not only teaching practices but also the broader learning experience.

Despite these developments, the integration of GenAI into blended and hybrid learning raises important pedagogical and ethical questions. Issues relating to academic integrity, algorithmic bias, data privacy, overreliance on AI-generated content, and the changing role of educators require careful consideration to ensure that technology complements rather than diminishes meaningful human interaction in education (Crompton & Burke, 2024). These challenges highlight the need to rethink instructional design in ways that combine technological innovation with sound pedagogical principles and learner-centred practices.

Although blended learning, hybrid learning, and educational technologies have been widely studied, comparatively less attention has been given to how GenAI is reshaping these instructional models within a unified pedagogical framework. Existing research has largely focused on technological adoption or specific AI applications, leaving a need for a broader synthesis of how GenAI influences the design, implementation, and future direction of blended and hybrid learning in higher education.

Against this backdrop, the present paper examines how GenAI is redefining blended and hybrid learning in higher education. It reviews the conceptual foundations of these instructional approaches, analyses the opportunities and challenges associated with AI-enabled teaching and learning, and discusses the policy and pedagogical implications of integrating GenAI into contemporary higher education. In doing so, the paper seeks to contribute to the ongoing discourse on developing intelligent, inclusive, and future-ready learning environments.

Conceptual Foundations: Blended, Hybrid Learning and Generative Artificial Intelligence

Blended and hybrid learning have emerged as transformative approaches in higher education, combining the strengths of face-to-face instruction with digital technologies to create more flexible, engaging, and learner-centred educational experiences. While these approaches gained momentum with the advancement of educational technologies, their widespread adoption accelerated during the COVID-19 pandemic, when institutions worldwide were compelled to shift rapidly from conventional classroom teaching to online and mixed-mode instruction (Bozkurt, A., Jung, I., Xiao, J., Vladimirsch, V., Schuwer, R., Egorov, G., Lambert, S. R., Al-Freih, M., Pete, J., Olcott, D., Jr., Rodes, V., Aranciaga, I., Bali, M., Alvarez, A. V., Roberts, J., Pazurek, A., Raffaghelli, J. E., Panagiotou, N., de Coëtlogon, P., ... Paskevicius, M., 2020; Hodges et al., 2020). The recent emergence of GenAI has further reshaped these learning models by enabling intelligent content generation, personalized learning support, and enhanced academic interactions.

Blended and Hybrid Learning

Blended learning refers to the deliberate integration of traditional face-to-face teaching with online learning activities in a manner that complements and enhances the learning experience (Graham, 2006). Rather than merely adding digital resources to classroom instruction, blended learning strategically combines classroom interaction with online discussions, multimedia content, learning management systems (LMS), quizzes, and self-paced activities. This approach promotes flexibility while maintaining meaningful teacher–student engagement and collaborative learning opportunities.

Hybrid learning, although often used interchangeably with blended learning, represents a more flexible instructional model in which students may participate either in person or remotely, often simultaneously. In a hybrid classroom, some learners attend physically while others join synchronously through digital platforms such as Zoom, Google Meet, or Microsoft Teams. Hybrid learning also incorporates asynchronous learning materials, allowing students to access recorded lectures, digital resources, and assessments at their convenience. Consequently, hybrid learning expands educational access by accommodating diverse learner needs, geographical constraints, and varying learning schedules (Raes, A., Detienne, L., Windey, I., & Depaepe, F. 2020).

Both blended and hybrid learning align closely with the objectives of learner-centred education by promoting flexibility, collaboration, active participation, and continuous learning beyond the physical classroom. These approaches have become integral components of higher education institutions seeking to improve educational quality, accessibility, and resilience in an increasingly digital world.

Generative Artificial Intelligence (GenAI) in Education

GenAI refers to a class of AI systems capable of producing new content including text, images, audio, video, computer code, and data analyses, in response to user prompts. Unlike traditional AI systems that primarily classify, predict, or retrieve information, Generative AI creates original outputs by learning patterns from vast datasets using advanced machine learning techniques, particularly LLMs and transformer architectures (Bommasani, R., Hudson, D. A., Adeli, E., Altman, R., Arora, S., von Arx, S., Bernstein, M. S., Bohg, J., Bosselut, A., Brunskill, E., Brynjolfsson, E., Buch, S., Card, D., Castellon, R., Chatterji, N., Chen, A., Creel, K., Davis, J. Q., Demszky, D., ... Liang, P., 2021; OpenAI, 2023).

Applications such as ChatGPT, Google Gemini, Claude, and Microsoft Copilot have rapidly gained prominence in educational settings due to their ability to explain complex concepts, generate lesson plans, summarize academic literature, develop assessment items, provide writing assistance, translate content, and offer immediate feedback. For students, these tools function as on-demand learning companions that facilitate independent learning, while for educators they reduce administrative workload and support instructional design.

The integration of Generative AI into blended and hybrid learning environments extends beyond automation. It enables adaptive learning pathways, personalized tutoring, multilingual support, content creation, and real-time academic assistance, thereby enriching both teaching and learning processes. However, these capabilities also necessitate responsible implementation to ensure academic integrity, transparency, and ethical use.

Theoretical Perspectives

The educational potential of blended, hybrid, and AI-supported learning can be understood through several established learning theories. Constructivist theory (Piaget, 1972) views learning as an active process in which learners construct knowledge through exploration and experience, while Vygotsky's Social Constructivism (1978) emphasizes collaboration and guided learning within the Zone of Proximal Development. Generative AI can complement these perspectives by providing scaffolding, explanations, and interactive learning support tailored to individual learners.

Connectivism, proposed by Siemens (2005), is particularly relevant in the digital age, emphasizing that learning occurs through networks of information, technologies, and social connections. Generative AI enhances these networks by facilitating rapid access to knowledge, supporting inquiry-based learning, and enabling continuous interaction with digital resources.

Similarly, the Technological Pedagogical Content Knowledge (TPACK) framework (Mishra & Koehler, 2006) highlights the importance of integrating technology with pedagogy and subject knowledge to achieve effective teaching. Generative AI represents a powerful technological component within this framework, offering educators innovative ways to design learning experiences while maintaining pedagogical effectiveness. Together, these theoretical perspectives provide a strong conceptual foundation for understanding how Generative AI can enrich blended and hybrid learning environments in contemporary higher education.

Opportunities of Generative AI in Blended and Hybrid Learning

The integration of GenAI into blended and hybrid learning environments has significantly expanded the possibilities for teaching and learning in higher education. By combining the flexibility of digital learning with the intelligence of AI-driven systems, educators can create more personalized, interactive, and inclusive learning experiences. Unlike conventional educational technologies that primarily facilitate content delivery, GenAI actively supports knowledge creation, adaptive instruction, and real-time learner engagement. These capabilities are particularly valuable in blended and hybrid settings, where learners often require individualized support while navigating both physical and virtual learning spaces (Kasneci et al., 2023). The following sections highlight the major opportunities presented by GenAI in contemporary higher education.

Personalized and Adaptive Learning

One of the most significant contributions of Generative AI is its ability to facilitate personalized learning experiences. Students differ in their learning pace, prior knowledge, interests, and preferred learning styles. Traditional classroom instruction often struggles to accommodate these individual differences, particularly in large classes. GenAI-powered tools can analyse learner inputs and generate customized explanations, practice exercises, summaries, and examples tailored to each student's level of understanding.

In blended and hybrid learning environments, AI tutors can provide continuous academic support beyond classroom hours, allowing students to revisit difficult concepts at their own pace. This promotes self-directed learning while reducing dependence on instructor availability. Adaptive learning pathways also enable learners to receive progressively challenging content based on their performance, thereby improving motivation and learning outcomes. Such personalization reflects the

broader shift toward learner-centred education advocated under the National Education Policy (NEP) 2020.

Intelligent Tutoring and Continuous Feedback

Timely feedback is essential for effective learning, yet providing individualized feedback remains a challenge for many educators due to increasing class sizes and administrative responsibilities. Generative AI addresses this challenge by functioning as an intelligent tutoring system capable of answering questions, explaining concepts, suggesting improvements, and providing immediate feedback on assignments.

Students can interact with AI conversationally to clarify doubts, receive alternative explanations, and practice problem-solving without waiting for scheduled class sessions. Such continuous support enhances learner confidence and encourages active engagement with course material. For educators, AI-generated formative feedback can reduce workload while allowing more time for mentoring, discussion, and higher-order learning activities. Nevertheless, human oversight remains essential to ensure accuracy and pedagogical appropriateness.

Content Creation and Instructional Design

Generative AI has transformed the process of developing educational resources. Educators can use AI tools to prepare lesson plans, lecture outlines, quizzes, discussion questions, case studies, summaries, rubrics, and multimedia learning materials within a fraction of the time required through conventional methods.

In blended and hybrid classrooms, where instructors often need separate materials for face-to-face, online synchronous, and asynchronous learning, AI significantly enhances instructional efficiency. It also supports the rapid updating of learning resources to reflect current developments, thereby keeping educational content relevant and engaging. Furthermore, AI can simplify complex concepts, generate examples suited to different academic levels, and translate instructional materials into multiple languages, making learning more accessible to diverse student populations (Luckin & Cukurova, 2019).

Enhanced Student Engagement and Collaborative Learning

Student engagement remains a central determinant of academic success in blended and hybrid learning environments. Generative AI contributes to greater engagement by facilitating interactive learning experiences through conversational interfaces, scenario-based simulations, brainstorming activities, and problem-solving exercises.

Students can use AI tools to explore multiple perspectives on a topic, generate ideas for research projects, refine academic writing, and participate in collaborative knowledge construction. Rather than replacing collaborative learning, AI can strengthen peer discussions by providing background information, stimulating inquiry, and encouraging critical reflection. When integrated thoughtfully, these technologies foster active participation, creativity, and deeper conceptual understanding while supporting collaborative learning communities.

Accessibility, Inclusion, and Faculty Support

Another important opportunity presented by Generative AI is its potential to improve educational accessibility and inclusivity. AI-powered systems can generate simplified explanations, translate educational content into different languages, produce captions for videos, convert text into speech, and support learners with diverse educational needs. Such features align with the principles of inclusive education and Universal Design for Learning (UDL), ensuring that educational opportunities are accessible to a broader range of students.

In addition to supporting learners, GenAI also enhances faculty productivity. Routine administrative tasks such as drafting emails, preparing instructional materials, creating assessment questions, and organizing course content can be partially automated, allowing educators to devote greater attention to mentoring, research, curriculum innovation, and student interaction. Consequently, the role of the teacher evolves from being primarily a transmitter of knowledge to that of a facilitator, mentor, and designer of meaningful learning experiences (Zawacki-Richter et al., 2019).

Overall, the integration of Generative AI into blended and hybrid learning represents a significant advancement in higher education. By enabling personalized instruction, intelligent tutoring, efficient content creation, enhanced engagement, and greater accessibility, GenAI has the potential to transform educational practices and improve learning outcomes. However, realizing these benefits requires responsible implementation, institutional support, and ethical governance to ensure that technological innovation complements rather than replaces the indispensable role of educators.

Challenges, Risks, and Ethical Considerations of Generative AI in Blended and Hybrid Learning

Despite its transformative potential, the integration of GenAI into blended and hybrid learning presents several pedagogical, ethical, technological, and institutional challenges. While AI-powered tools can enhance learning experiences, their effectiveness depends on responsible implementation, informed policy frameworks, and continuous human oversight. Without appropriate safeguards, the widespread adoption of GenAI may compromise academic integrity, widen educational inequalities, and undermine the quality of teaching and learning. Consequently, higher education institutions must critically evaluate both the opportunities and the risks associated with these technologies.

Academic Integrity and Authentic Assessment

One of the most widely debated concerns surrounding Generative AI is its impact on academic integrity. AI-powered applications can generate essays, reports, programming code, research summaries, and solutions to complex problems within seconds. While these capabilities can support learning when used responsibly, they also increase the likelihood of plagiarism, contract cheating, and unauthorized assistance during assessments (Cotton, D. R. E., Cotton, P. A., & Shipway, J. R., 2024).

Traditional take-home assignments and written assessments are particularly vulnerable, as educators may find it increasingly difficult to distinguish between original student work and AI-generated content. Moreover, AI detection tools currently available are not entirely reliable and may incorrectly classify authentic student writing as AI-generated or fail to detect sophisticated AI-assisted work (Perkins, 2023). These challenges necessitate a shift towards authentic assessment strategies, including project-based learning, oral examinations, reflective writing, portfolios, collaborative

projects, and real-world problem-solving activities that emphasize critical thinking and creativity rather than simple content production.

Accuracy, Hallucinations, and Reliability of AI Outputs

Although Generative AI systems produce fluent and convincing responses, they do not always generate accurate information. Large Language Models (LLMs) may produce fabricated references, incorrect factual statements, outdated information, or misleading explanations, a phenomenon commonly referred to as AI hallucination (OpenAI, 2023).

In educational contexts, students who rely uncritically on AI-generated responses risk acquiring misconceptions or citing non-existent sources in academic work. Likewise, educators who use AI for instructional planning without verification may inadvertently introduce inaccuracies into teaching materials. Therefore, AI-generated outputs should be viewed as starting points for inquiry rather than authoritative sources of knowledge. Developing students' information literacy, critical evaluation skills, and responsible AI use becomes increasingly important in AI-enabled learning environments.

Data Privacy, Security, and Ethical Concerns

The growing use of cloud-based AI platforms raises significant concerns regarding data privacy, confidentiality, and ethical governance. Many AI applications require users to input personal information, academic work, or institutional data, which may be processed and stored on external servers. Without clear institutional policies, there is a risk of exposing sensitive information or violating data protection regulations.

Ethical concerns also extend to algorithmic bias and transparency. Since AI models are trained on vast datasets collected from diverse sources, they may inadvertently reproduce social, cultural, linguistic, or gender biases embedded within those data. Such biases can influence generated content, reinforce stereotypes, or disadvantage particular groups of learners. Consequently, institutions must promote ethical AI literacy, establish governance frameworks, and encourage transparency regarding the appropriate use of AI in teaching, learning, and assessment.

Digital Divide and Faculty Readiness

The successful integration of Generative AI depends not only on technological availability but also on equitable access and institutional preparedness. Significant disparities remain in internet connectivity, digital infrastructure, device availability, and AI literacy across institutions and student populations, particularly in developing countries and geographically remote regions. These inequalities may limit the benefits of AI-supported blended and hybrid learning and further widen existing educational gaps (OECD, 2023).

Faculty readiness represents another critical challenge. Many educators have limited experience in integrating AI into curriculum design, assessment, or classroom instruction. Concerns regarding job displacement, reduced academic standards, and uncertainty about appropriate pedagogical practices may also contribute to resistance toward AI adoption. Addressing these challenges requires sustained professional development, institutional support, and opportunities for educators to develop AI competencies alongside pedagogical expertise.

Preserving the Human Dimension of Education

While Generative AI can automate numerous educational tasks, it cannot replace the interpersonal relationships that lie at the heart of effective teaching. Education involves mentorship, empathy, ethical guidance, emotional support, and social interaction, which are qualities that remain uniquely human. Excessive dependence on AI may reduce meaningful teacher–student engagement, weaken collaborative learning experiences, and encourage passive reliance on automated solutions.

Accordingly, GenAI should be viewed as an assistive technology rather than a substitute for educators. The teacher's role is evolving from being primarily a transmitter of knowledge to becoming a facilitator of learning, mentor, critical guide, and ethical steward of technology-enhanced education. Maintaining this human-centred approach is essential for ensuring that technological innovation strengthens rather than diminishes the educational experience.

Overall, while Generative AI offers unprecedented opportunities for blended and hybrid learning, its successful implementation requires thoughtful governance, ethical safeguards, inclusive access, and continuous human oversight. Higher education institutions must therefore adopt balanced strategies that maximize the educational benefits of AI while addressing the challenges associated with its responsible and equitable use.

Role of UGC, NEP 2020, and Policy Directions

The successful integration of GenAI into blended and hybrid learning requires a supportive policy ecosystem that promotes innovation while ensuring quality, equity, and ethical use. In India, the National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 provides a strong foundation for technology-enabled education by emphasizing digital learning, multidisciplinary education, flexible curricula, and the responsible use of emerging technologies to improve teaching and learning. The policy envisions technology as an enabler of equitable access, personalized learning, and continuous professional development for educators (Ministry of Education, 2020).

Aligned with the objectives of NEP 2020, the University Grants Commission (UGC) has introduced several initiatives to strengthen digital education in higher education institutions. The UGC Guidelines for Multiple Entry and Exit, Academic Bank of Credits (ABC), National Digital Library of India (NDLI), and online learning platforms such as SWAYAM encourage flexible, learner-centred education. Furthermore, the UGC Guidelines for Blended Mode of Teaching and Learning (2021) provide a structured framework for integrating face-to-face and online instruction, enabling institutions to adopt innovative pedagogical approaches while maintaining academic quality.

Recognizing the rapid advancement of artificial intelligence, the UGC has also encouraged higher education institutions to develop AI literacy, strengthen digital infrastructure, and promote the ethical use of AI in teaching, learning, research, and assessment. These efforts are complemented by initiatives from AICTE, the Ministry of Education, and the National Educational Technology Forum (NETF), which advocate the responsible integration of emerging technologies into the higher education ecosystem.

However, policy implementation remains uneven across institutions. Many colleges continue to face challenges related to digital infrastructure, internet connectivity, faculty preparedness for AI adoption. To maximize the educational potential of GenAI, policy frameworks should move beyond

technology adoption to include comprehensive faculty training, AI literacy programmes for students, institutional guidelines on ethical AI use, data privacy safeguards, and revised assessment practices that encourage critical thinking rather than content reproduction. Such measures will ensure that Generative AI becomes a catalyst for educational transformation while preserving academic integrity and learner-centred pedagogy.

Recommendations for Higher Education Institutions

To harness the full potential of GenAI in blended and hybrid learning, higher education institutions must adopt strategic and learner-centred implementation approaches. The integration of AI should complement pedagogical objectives rather than being viewed merely as a technological innovation.

First, institutions should invest in continuous faculty development by providing training on AI literacy, prompt engineering, ethical AI use, and the pedagogical integration of GenAI into curriculum design, assessment, and student support. Empowering educators with these competencies will enable them to use AI effectively while maintaining academic standards.

Second, universities should develop institutional policies and ethical guidelines governing the use of Generative AI. Such policies should clearly define acceptable and unacceptable uses of AI in teaching, learning, research, and assessment, while addressing issues related to academic integrity, transparency, data privacy, intellectual property, and accountability.

Third, assessment practices should be redesigned to emphasize higher-order cognitive skills such as critical thinking, creativity, problem-solving, collaboration, and reflection. Authentic assessments, including project-based learning, case studies, presentations, oral examinations, and reflective portfolios, are less susceptible to misuse of AI-generated content and better evaluate students' understanding and application of knowledge.

Fourth, institutions should strengthen digital infrastructure and equitable access to AI-enabled educational technologies. Reliable internet connectivity, modern learning management systems, digital libraries, and licensed AI tools should be made available to both students and faculty, ensuring that technological advancements do not widen existing educational inequalities.

Finally, the adoption of GenAI should remain human-centred. AI should be viewed as an educational assistant that enhances teaching and learning rather than replacing the expertise, mentorship, and ethical guidance provided by educators. A balanced approach that combines technological innovation with sound pedagogy, inclusivity, and responsible governance will enable higher education institutions to build resilient and future-ready learning environments.

Conclusion

The emergence of GenAI marks a significant turning point in the evolution of blended and hybrid learning in higher education. By enabling personalized learning, intelligent tutoring, efficient content creation, enhanced accessibility, and improved instructional support, GenAI has the potential to transform teaching and learning into more flexible, engaging, and learner-centred experiences. These capabilities align closely with the broader goals of educational innovation, digital transformation, and lifelong learning envisioned in contemporary higher education.

At the same time, the integration of GenAI presents important challenges related to academic integrity, data privacy, algorithmic bias, digital inequality, and faculty preparedness. Addressing these concerns requires a balanced approach that combines technological advancement with sound pedagogy, ethical governance, institutional readiness, and continuous professional development. Rather than replacing educators, GenAI should serve as a complementary tool that enhances teaching effectiveness while preserving the essential human dimensions of education, including mentorship, critical inquiry, empathy, and meaningful interaction.

In the Indian context, policy initiatives such as the National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 and the University Grants Commission's digital education reforms provide a strong foundation for the responsible integration of AI into higher education. However, translating these policy aspirations into practice will require sustained investment in digital infrastructure, AI literacy, institutional governance, and innovative assessment practices.

Ultimately, the future of blended and hybrid learning will depend not only on the advancement of artificial intelligence but also on the collective ability of educators, institutions, and policymakers to harness these technologies responsibly. When guided by pedagogical principles, ethical values, and inclusive policies, Generative AI can become a powerful catalyst for creating resilient, equitable, and future-ready higher education systems.

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Role of Education in Promoting Life Skills and Mental Health among Undergraduate Students in Mizoram

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Abstract

This study explores the role of education in fostering life skills and enhancing mental health among undergraduate students in Mizoram. Recognizing the increasing challenges faced by students in academic and social environments, education serves as a critical platform to develop essential life skills such as communication, problem-solving, emotional regulation, and resilience. By integrating life skills education within the curriculum and extracurricular activities, educational institutions in Mizoram can contribute significantly to promoting mental well-being and reducing psychological distress among students. The research highlights the impact of structured educational interventions on students' ability to cope with stress, build healthy relationships, and maintain a balanced mental state. Emphasizing culturally relevant approaches, the study underscores the importance of educational programs that address the unique socio-cultural context of Mizoram. Ultimately, education emerges as a vital tool not only for academic achievement but also for holistic development, equipping undergraduate students with the competencies necessary for mental health promotion and lifelong well-being.

Keywords: Education, Life Skills, Mental Health, Undergraduate Students

Introduction:

Education is widely recognized as one of the most effective social institutions for shaping knowledge, behaviour, values, and overall health. Higher education plays a significant role in helping young adults develop life skills, such as decision-making, critical thinking, communication, emotional regulation, problem-solving, and interpersonal competence (Mirowsky & Ross, 2005). These skills are especially important during undergraduate years, a period marked by major transitions in identity, independence, social relationships, and career expectations. Simultaneously, this stage of life is associated with increased vulnerability to stress, anxiety, low mood, academic pressure, and adjustment difficulties. In this context, education can serve not only as a means of intellectual growth but also as a protective factor that supports students' mental health and prepares them for healthy functioning in their personal, academic, and social lives (Derosier, M. E., Frank, E., Schwartz, V., & Leary, K. A. 2013).

Life skills education has gained global attention as a practical approach to strengthening students' abilities to cope with everyday challenges and make healthy choices. For undergraduate students, life skills are not merely desirable traits; they are essential competencies that influence academic performance, relationships, emotional resilience, and future employability (Shirani

Bidabadi, N., Nili, M., Manani, R., & Khalili, R., 2016). Classrooms, campus environments, and co-curricular activities provide valuable opportunities for students to learn how to communicate effectively, manage time, handle stress, work collaboratively, and respond constructively to conflict. When these competencies are intentionally integrated into educational experiences, students are better equipped to navigate the demands of adulthood and maintain their psychological well-being. Thus, education has the potential to function as a platform for personal development and mental health promotion (Nair & Fahimirad, 2019).

Students' mental health has become an increasingly important concern in recent years. Undergraduate students often face a combination of academic workload, financial pressure, family expectations, peer comparison, relationship challenges, and uncertainty about the future. These pressures can negatively affect concentration, motivation, self-esteem, and overall quality of life. If mental health needs are not addressed early, students may experience declining academic outcomes, poor social adjustment, and long-term emotional difficulties. (Gull, M., Kaur, N., Abuhasan, W. M. F., Kandi, S., & Nair, S. M., (2025). Educational institutions therefore have a responsibility to create supportive learning environments that foster resilience, encourage help-seeking, and promote healthy coping mechanisms. In this regard, the role of education extends far beyond formal instruction and includes the creation of emotionally supportive spaces that nurture student well-being.

In the context of Mizoram, education occupies a central place in social development and youth empowerment. The state has a young population, and undergraduate students represent an important segment whose well-being is closely linked to the region's future human resource development. Mizoram also has unique socio-cultural characteristics, including strong community ties, cultural values, and changing social expectations, all of which shape students' educational experiences and mental health needs. While these cultural strengths can provide support and belonging, students may also encounter stress related to academic competitiveness, family responsibilities, transition from rural to urban settings, and evolving career aspirations. Understanding how education contributes to life skills and mental health in this setting is therefore particularly relevant. Such an inquiry can help identify locally meaningful strategies for strengthening student support systems within colleges and universities.

Need and importance of the study:

Education does not influence students in a single uniform way. Its impact depends on curriculum design, teaching methods, teacher-student interaction, peer climate, institutional support, and access to counselling or guidance services. A curriculum that includes participatory learning, communication-based activities, value education, and student-centred approaches is more likely to promote life skills than one focused only on memorization and examinations. Similarly, institutions that recognize mental health as part of student welfare can foster a healthier academic environment through awareness programs, mentorship, and supportive policies. Therefore, the relationship between education, life skills, and mental health should be understood as dynamic and interconnected rather than isolated (Wei, Y., Kutcher, S., Austen, E., Comfort, A., Gilham, C., Macdougall, C., McKenna, G., McKinnon, M., Thompson, K., Yeo, E., Zhang, M., Baxter, A., & Matheson, K., 2021). Despite the growing recognition of student well-being in higher education, there remains a need for more context-specific understanding of how education promotes life skills and mental health among undergraduate students in Mizoram. Local evidence is important because the experiences of students are shaped by regional, cultural, and institutional

factors that may differ from those in other parts of India or beyond. A focused study on this topic can contribute to academic literature, inform educational planning, and support the development of student-centred interventions. It can also help educators, administrators, and policy makers recognize the broader value of education as a tool for holistic development.

This study, therefore, seeks to explore the role of education in promoting life skills and mental health among undergraduate students in Mizoram. By examining this relationship, the study aims to highlight the importance of educational settings in supporting not only academic success but also emotional well-being, personal growth, and social competence. The findings may offer useful insights for strengthening undergraduate education in ways that prepare students to lead balanced, resilient, and productive lives.

Objectives of the study:

The objectives of the study are given as follows:

1. To find out the level of life skills among undergraduate students in Mizoram.
2. To find out the level of mental health among undergraduate students in Mizoram.
3. To find out the relationship between life skills and mental health among undergraduate students in Mizoram.

Definition of key terms:

Education: Here, education refers to the formal process of teaching and learning received by Undergraduate students in colleges and universities in Mizoram.

Mental health: Mental health refers to a state of emotional, psychological, and social well-being in which an individual can cope with normal life stresses.

Life Skills: Life skills are a set of psychosocial abilities that enable individuals to effectively manage the demands and challenges of everyday life. Core competencies include self-awareness, critical thinking, problem-solving, emotional regulation, and interpersonal skills.

Undergraduate: A student enrolled in a post-secondary institution pursuing their first academic degree, typically a bachelor's degree.

Methodology:

Method of the study: This Research is descriptive in nature. The research methodology focuses on role of education, life skills and mental health of undergraduate students in Mizoram.

Population: The population includes all Undergraduate students studying in different colleges in Mizoram.

Sample: A total of 400 undergraduate students from selected colleges in Mizoram were selected as sample using multistage random sampling technique.

Tools used: **Mental Health Inventory by Dr. Jagdish and Dr. A.K. Srivastava** and a self-developed Life Skills Scale was used to find out the mental health and life skills of the students.

Statistical Techniques: Descriptive statistics such as mean, standard deviation, t-test and inferential statistics like Pearson product moment correlation was used.

Major findings of the study:

The major findings of the study are presented in the following tables 1, 2 and 3.

1. Findings regarding the level of Life skills among Undergraduate students in Mizoram.

Table 1

Level of Life skills among Undergraduate students in Mizoram

Component	N	Mean	SD	High	Average	Low
Life Skill	400	165.67	17.141	122 (40.66%)	232 (77.33%)	46 (15.33%)

From the above Table 1, it was found that majority of the respondents 77.33% (232) reported average level of life skills. This was followed by 40.66%, (122) who reported high life skills level and 15.33%, (46) who reported low life skills level.

2. Findings regarding the level of Mental Health among Undergraduate students in Mizoram.

Table 2

Level of Mental Health among Undergraduate students in Mizoram.

Component	N	Mean	SD	High	Average	Low
Mental Health	400	147.41	18.035	133 (44.33%)	241 (80.33%)	46 (15.33%)

From the above Table 2, it was found that majority of the respondents 80.33% (241) reported average level of mental health. This was followed by 44.33% (133) who reported high mental health level and 15.33% (46) who reported low mental health level.

3. Findings regarding the relationship between life skills and Mental Health among Undergraduate students in Mizoram.

Table 3
Relationship between life skills and Mental Health among Undergraduate students in Mizoram

Correlations			
		Mental Health	Life Skills
Mental Health	Pearson Correlation	1	.681**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	400	400
Life Skills	Pearson Correlation	.681**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	400	400
**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).			

From the above Table 3, it was found that there is a strong positive and significant correlation between mental health and life skills among undergraduate students ($r = .681, p < 0.01$). This indicates that higher life skills are associated with better mental health. The findings also suggest that life skills and mental health are closely connected, and improving one may be associated with improvement in the other.

Suggestions and recommendations:

1. **Include life skills training in the curriculum.** Colleges should add regular sessions on communication, decision-making, problem-solving, stress management, and emotional regulation so students can build practical skills alongside academics.
2. **Strengthen mental health support services.** Institutions should provide counselling, peer support, and mental health awareness programmes to help students manage academic pressure, anxiety, and personal problems early.
3. **Use student-centred teaching methods.** Teachers should encourage group discussion, presentations, projects, and interactive learning, since these methods improve confidence, teamwork, and critical thinking while also supporting well-being.
4. **Conduct awareness and skill-building programmes.** Colleges should organize workshops on coping skills, self-esteem, time management, substance abuse prevention, and healthy lifestyle practices to promote both life skills and mental health.

5. **Create a supportive campus environment.** Administrators should build a friendly atmosphere where students feel safe, respected, and heard, because supportive relationships with teachers and peers can improve adjustment and psychological health.

Conclusion:

The study found that majority of the respondents (77.33 %) had average level of life skills. A moderate number (40.66%) had high life skills level and a small number (15.33%) had low life skills level.

It was also found that majority of the respondents (80.33%) had average level of mental health. Almost half (44.33%) had high mental health level and a small number 15.33% had low mental health level. It was further found that there is a strong positive and significant correlation ($r=.681$) between mental health and life skills among undergraduate students.

Thus, the findings indicate that most undergraduate students reported average levels of both life skills and mental health, with smaller groups showing high or low levels. The two variables were strongly and positively correlated, meaning better life skills were associated with better mental health.

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Attitude of Adolescents towards Sexuality and Healthy behaviours in Churachandpur district of Manipur: A Critical study

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Abstract

Adolescence is a transitional phase of life spanning ages 10 to 19 that bridges childhood and adulthood, during which an individual's emerging sexuality develops rapidly through interconnected biological, psychological, and social changes. According to the World Health Organization (WHO), this period is crucial for establishing long-term health foundations. Emerging sexuality is a natural, normal part of this journey. It encompasses not just physical acts, but a developing sense of identity, emotional expression, and relationship-building. The objective of the present study is to find out the Attitude of adolescents towards sexuality and Healthy behaviours. For the study, a sample of 400 students belonging to ten different schools in Churachandpur district of Manipur was selected. A questionnaire to assess the attitude of adolescents relating to sexuality and healthy behaviours constructed by the investigators was used for data collection. The study revealed that irrespective of their gender a high percentage of adolescents have positive attitude towards sexuality and engaging in healthy behaviours.

Keywords: Attitude, Adolescents, Students, Sexuality, Healthy behaviours

Introduction

Sexuality remains one of the most fiercely debated topics in modern education and adolescent health. Public discourses and curriculum initiatives are frequently driven by conflicting religious, social, and cultural values, often overshadowing empirical, scientific evidence.

Adolescence is a critical transitional phase marked by profound biological, psychological, and social shifts. As youths navigate this struggle for autonomy, they become highly vulnerable to risks such as unprotected or nonconsensual sex, sexually transmitted infections (STIs), and sexual abuse. This lack of accurate sexual health literacy directly correlates with increased mortality, morbidity, and severe social challenges among young people.

Furthermore, systemic social pressures and cultural taboos make dialogues surrounding sex, gender sensitivity, and anatomy highly complex. These conversations can feel particularly sensitive or risky when engaging prepubescent children (Morgan & Leent, 2021).

Comprehensive sex education dismantles these taboos, empowering young people to make safe, informed choices. Often framed as family life education, it provides factual knowledge while fostering healthy attitudes and values (Ferguson et al., 2022). Ultimately, cultivating positive perspectives on sexual health requires schools to implement age-appropriate curricula that carefully balance evidence-based instruction with local societal customs and cultural ethos.

Review of related literature

Pathak et al. (2026) conducted a study on “Assessing Sexual Health Knowledge, Attitude, and Perception Among Adolescents: A Pre-post Intervention Study in Varanasi, India”, and found that there was a significant change in Knowledge, Attitude, and Perception of adolescents regarding sex education through their intervention. The findings support the need for culturally appropriate, age-sensitive, and evidence-based school-based sexuality education as part of adolescent health promotion.

Ena et al. (2015) in their study “Knowledge, Attitudes and Practices towards Risky Sexual Behaviors among Adolescents of Jimma University Community High School, Southwest Ethiopia, 2015”, concluded that there was high practice of sexual activity, high prevalence of premarital sex, low utilization of condom and contraceptives and only around half of the participants thought of condom as it prevents HIV/ AIDS, that increases short and long term consequences and risks of sexual behaviour.

Hegde et al. (2022) analysed “Understanding Adolescent Sexuality: A Developmental Perspective” and found that in developing countries such as India, challenges for adolescents increase with higher risk associated with early marriages, unplanned pregnancies, sexual abuse, and insufficient information regarding sexual behaviour and risks. Therefore, flexible, religious, and culturally sensitive yet scientifically sound developmentally informed programs are the need of the hour to educate the youth about sexuality.

Rationale of the study

As the second-largest town in Manipur and a hub for numerous ethnic tribes, Churachandpur possesses a rich tapestry of dialects, customs, and traditions. The town features a dense educational and religious landscape, comprising eight colleges, over thirty schools, and numerous churches representing various Christian denominations. The population is overwhelmingly tribal (approximately 99%), predominantly consisting of Chin, Kuki, Hmar, and Mizo language speakers. Consequently, students come from diverse backgrounds, each shaped by distinct cultural practices, belief systems, and worldviews.

Within this community, customary rites, religious practices, and family traditions deeply govern individual lives. These structures dictate milestones like birth, death, marriage, and divorce, while defining social obligations, gender roles, education, and career paths. Consequently, sexuality operates at a complex intersection of rigid cultural norms and a deeply ingrained heteronormative social system. Communal life remains dominated by patriarchal, gender-conforming values, rendering dialogues about sexuality deeply uncomfortable. Ironically, this widespread reticence persists despite the town's remarkably high literacy and education rates.

While public health data reveals pressing challenges—including sexual abuse, teenage pregnancies, and high HIV/AIDS prevalence rates—and LGBTQ+ visibility has steadily grown,

public discourse regarding sexual health remains highly taboo. Community members frequently avoid discussions on sex education and reproductive health. To address this critical gap, this study assesses adolescent attitudes toward sexuality and healthy behaviours, offering data-driven recommendations to foster constructive interventions.

Objectives of the study

1. To examine the attitude of adolescents on sexuality and healthy behaviours in Churachandpur district of Manipur.
2. To examine the gender differences in the attitude of adolescents on sexuality and healthy behaviours in Churachandpur district of Manipur.
3. To compare the gender differences in the attitude of adolescents with regard to the different components on sexuality and healthy behaviours in Churachandpur district of Manipur.
4. To suggest measures for promoting positive attitude towards sexuality and healthy behaviours among the adolescents.

Hypotheses of the study:

For the present study the following null hypothesis has been formulated

1. There is no significant difference between male and female students with regard to their attitude on sexuality and healthy behaviours in Churachandpur district of Manipur.
2. There is no significant difference between male and female students with regard to their attitude on the different components on sexuality and healthy behaviours in Churachandpur district of Manipur.

Methodology

The descriptive survey method was used for the present investigation since the study's primary purpose is to determine the attitude of adolescents towards sexuality and healthy behaviours.

Population and Sample

The population in the present study consists of all adolescents between the ages of 12-17 years studying in ten high schools in Churachandpur district of Manipur. The total sample of the study comprised of 400 students comprising of 200 urban male and 200 urban female adolescents respectively.

Tools used for data collection

A questionnaire to assess the attitude of adolescent students relating to sexuality and healthy behaviours constructed by the investigators was used.

The questionnaire consisted of 32 statements, of multiple-choice type and alternative response types ("YES" and "NO") to reveal the attitude of adolescent students on each of the four components i.e. sexuality, sexual abuse, sexually transmitted infections HIV/AIDS, Sex education.

Mode of data collection

For the present study, data was collected from ten high schools in Churachandpur district of Manipur.

Analysis of data

Data collected was analysed quantitatively and qualitatively using descriptive statistics like percentage, mean, S.D, and t- tests.

Findings and interpretation

The findings of the present study are presented in the following tables followed by components-wise interpretation.

Table 1
Overall Attitudes of Adolescents Towards the Four Components of Sexuality and Healthy Behaviour in Churachandpur district of Manipur

Sl.no	Components	Group	N	Low attitude	Moderate attitude	High attitude
1	Sexuality	Male	200	30 (15)	64 (32)	106 (53)
		Female	200	26 (13)	91 (45.5)	83 (41.5)
		Total	400	56 (14)	155 (38.75)	189 (47.25)
2	STIs /HIV/AIDS	Male	200	29 (14.5)	72 (36)	99 (49.5)
		Female	200	34 (17)	62 (31)	104 (52)
		Total	400	63 (15.75)	134 (33.5)	203 (50.75)
3	Sexual abuse	Male	200	25 (12.5)	85 (42.5)	90 (45)
		Female	200	34 (17)	62 (31)	104 (52)
		Total	400	59 (14.75)	147 (36.75)	194 (48.5)
4	Sex Education	Male	200	24 (12)	80 (40)	96 (48)
		Female	200	27 (13.5)	60 (30)	113 (56.5)
		Total	400	51 (12.75)	140 (35)	209 (52.25)

*Figures in the Parenthesis indicate percentage

From table-1, it can be seen that out of all the students taken for the study, on the component on sexuality it was found that 94.5 % of students irrespective of their gender have high attitude towards their sexuality, healthy practices and to abstain from unhealthy sexual behaviours.

On the component on sexual abuse, it was found that 50.75% of students have high attitude towards the negative impact of sexual abuse. While 33.5% have moderate attitude and 15.75% of all the students irrespective of their gender have low attitude towards the negative impact of sexual abuse.

On the component on STIs /HIV/AIDS, table-1 reveals that 48.5% of students irrespective of their gender have high attitude towards healthy sexual behaviours. Whereas 14.75% of all the students in the study have low attitude and about 36.75% have moderate attitude towards healthy sexual behaviours to avoid contracting STIs /HIV/AIDS

Table-1 also reveals that on the component on sex education, 52.25% of students irrespective of gender have high attitude with regard to sex education and dissemination of information on sex and healthy behaviours. 35% of all students were found to have moderate attitude towards sex education while 12.75% had low attitude towards sex education and dissemination of information on sex and healthy behaviours.

Hence, it can be concluded that irrespective of gender, majority of the students (adolescents) have high attitude towards sexuality and healthy behaviours.

Table 2
Comparison of Attitudes of Adolescents Towards the Four Components of Sexuality and Healthy Behaviour in Churachandpur district of Manipur

Sl. no	Components	Group	N	Mean	S.D.	t-value	Significance level
1	Sexuality	Male	200	20.65	2.99	1.24	NS
		Female	200	20.26	3.37		
2	Sexual Abuse	Male	200	20.56	3.07	1.07	NS
		Female	200	20.23	3.02		
3	STIs /HIV/AIDS	Male	200	20.26	3.37	0.93	NS
		Female	200	20.56	3.07		
4	Sex Education	Male	200	20.23	3.02	1.39	NS
		Female	200	20.65	2.99		

**NS-Not Significant*

Table-2 reveals that the t-values relating to the comparisons of attitudes of students on the different components of sexuality and healthy behaviours are not significant. Therefore, the

hypothesis- ‘There is no significant difference between male and female students with regard to their attitude on the different components on sexuality and healthy behaviours’ is not rejected. This implies that there are no significant differences in the attitudes of students irrespective of their gender with regard to the different components on sexuality and healthy behaviours.

Table3
Gender Differences in the Attitudes of Adolescents in Churachandpur district of Manipur

Groups Compared	N	Mean	S.D.	t-value	Significance level
Male	200	20.43	3.11	1.16	NS
Female	200	20.41	3.10		

*NS-Not Significant

Table-3, reveals that the calculated t-value relating to gender differences on their attitude towards sexuality and healthy behaviours is not significant. Therefore, the hypothesis- ‘There is no significant difference between male and female students with regard to their attitude on sexuality and healthy behaviours’ is not rejected. This implies that there is no significant difference in the attitude of male and female college students on sexuality and healthy behaviours.

Major findings

1. From the present study it was found that majority of adolescents/students (94.5%) have high attitude towards sexuality and healthy behaviours, and on the risks of indulging in unhealthy sexual activities. Table -1 revealed that all students have healthy attitude and they opined individuals should accept their biological sex, that only married people should have sex, that it is against cultural values to have sex before marriage, that it is not the right time to experience sex, that there is harm to enjoy sex during school life despite mutual consent of partners, and that engaging in sexual activities before marriage leads to many problems later.
2. It was also found that out of all the students taken for the study, 50.75% have high attitude towards the negative impact of sexual abuse such as hurting someone using sex, committing sexual crimes as minors, that individuals could be both victims and perpetrators, sexual offences etc.
3. The present study also revealed that irrespective of their gender, out of all the students taken for the study 48.5% have high attitude towards healthy sexual behaviours. The results indicated that students were of the opinion that by involving in unhealthy sexual activities they were at the risk of being infected by STIs /HIV/AIDS. That STIs /HIV/AIDS infected people were the victims of their own irresponsible behaviour, majority of STIs /HIV/AIDS infected people may be married persons, STIs /HIV/AIDS is most common among drug users and prostitutes, that students with STIs /HIV/AIDS should continue their studies, and it is possible to prevent STIs /HIV/AIDS transmission through creative awareness and students should not be tempted to experience sex and drugs.

4. It was found that all the students irrespective of their gender have high (52.25%) attitude towards sex education. They are of the opinion that sex education should start early, that proper knowledge about sex and related issues should be disseminated in the classrooms and the community at large, that transmission of STIs /HIV/AIDS could be avoided largely with sex education, that healthy behaviours regarding sexuality should be encouraged, etc.
5. The present study indicated that there is no significant difference in the attitude of adolescents/students irrespective of their gender regarding their attitude on sexuality and healthy behaviours. On comparisons of attitudes of adolescents on the different components of sexuality and healthy behaviours the study indicated that there is no significant difference in the attitudes of adolescents irrespective of their gender regarding the different components on sexuality and healthy behaviours.

Discussion of Results

The results of the study revealed that most students, irrespective of gender, exhibit a positive attitude toward their sexuality, healthy practices, and abstaining from unhealthy sexual behaviours. This trend may largely be due to the fact that across all societies—whether historical or contemporary—marriage remains a foundational socio-religious institution. It serves to satisfy the physical, biological, psychological, and spiritual needs of individuals, ultimately leading to the formation of a family unit. Consequently, the growth, development, and overall stability of human society depend on this universal and primary institution. Given this vital importance, the sanctity and permanence of marriage are heavily emphasized in most cultures, and the tribal society of Churachandpur is no exception. Another contributing factor is religion. Most of the students (Chin-Kuki-Hmar-Mizo) identify as Christian. Research indicates that higher levels of religiosity predict a lower likelihood of adolescent sexual initiation, an association often mediated by conservative sexual attitudes (Haydon et al., 2012). This religious influence persists into adulthood; individuals who attend religious services regularly during adolescence remain significantly less likely to engage in risky sexual behaviours later in life.

The study also revealed that most students exhibit a strong awareness of the negative impacts of sexual abuse and maintain positive attitudes toward healthy sexual behaviours to prevent STIs and HIV/AIDS. Irrespective of gender, adolescents strongly support sex education and the dissemination of information on sexual health. These perspectives may stem from the traditionally conservative views on sexuality held by tribal students in Churachandpur, who generally oppose liberal social interactions between adolescent boys and girls, as well as pre-marital sex. This mindset can be attributed to two key factors: deep-rooted respect for their cultural ethos and the influence of formal education. Education undoubtedly shapes adolescent mindsets to encourage abstinence, motivate academic completion, and provide critical information regarding the risks of unwanted pregnancies, unnecessary encumbrances, and a bleak future.

Suggestions

Based on the current findings, the following recommendations are proposed to enhance adolescent sexual health education and safety.

- **Comprehensive Information Dissemination:** Provide adolescent students with accurate, age-appropriate, and essential information regarding sex, sexuality, sexual orientations, and healthy behaviours.
- **Legal and Protection Awareness:** Deliver comprehensive education on legal rights, the legal implications of sexual abuse, and statutory protection frameworks such as the POCSO Act.
- **Expert-Led Educational Seminars:** Organize institutional lectures, seminars, and workshops featuring specialists from relevant fields to raise awareness about healthy sexual behaviours, the dangers of sexual abuse, and the prevention of STIs, HIV, and AIDS.
- **Early Curriculum Integration:** Address historical gaps in early childhood sex education by mandating that educational boards incorporate comprehensive sexual health content into curricula and textbooks at an early stage. This proactive approach aims to mitigate sex-related crimes, high-risk sexual practices, teenage pregnancies, and STIs without societal prejudice.
- **Multi-Sectoral Collaboration:** Foster structural partnerships among schools, non-governmental organizations (NGOs), and relevant government sectors—such as the Department of Education, the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare, and the Department of Social Welfare—to cultivate robust life-skills education within the community.
- **Institutional Support Systems:** Establish institutional support structures, including sexual harassment committees, rehabilitation networks, and dedicated counselling programs, to address student concerns regarding sexuality and to foster healthy behavioural development.
- **Clinical Assessment Frameworks:** Adolescents face pervasive exposure to sexual imagery and messaging on television, which is universally normalized with minimal discussion of potential risks or adverse health consequences. Healthcare practitioners should routinely evaluate electronic media consumption, internet habits, and age-restricted content access when taking medical histories to assess risk behaviours.
- **Proactive Stakeholder Engagement:** Convene regular parent-teacher conferences to allow guardians to review the sexual health curriculum and instructional methodologies prior to implementation, thereby preventing future systemic friction or misalignment.

Conclusion

Today's youth represent the future of society; the attitudes they form during adolescence profoundly shape their adult identities. Consequently, sexuality must not be viewed merely as a reflection of biological changes. Instead, it is a lifelong process encompassing a diverse matrix of experiences, including emotions, physiological urges, intrinsic motivations, self-perception, moral precepts, and interpersonal dynamics. It is therefore crucial that educators, parents, and academic institutions engage adolescents in comprehensive, inclusive, and evidence-based dialogues regarding sexuality, healthy practices, and developmental challenges. Providing adolescents with holistic knowledge and essential life skills fosters the positive attitudes necessary for healthy sexual development and overall well-being.

Furthermore, parental supervision and guidance regarding media consumption habits—both in volume and content—remain vital. Passive monitoring should ideally be replaced with joint viewing or shared media participation. When co-viewing is unfeasible, parents and guardians should utilize technological safeguards, such as network screening software and television content filters, to mitigate exposure to inappropriate material. Ultimately, adults must guide adolescents in critically evaluating media narratives, which frequently offer unrealistic depictions of characters, products,

behaviours, and relationships. Cultivating media literacy and training adolescents to be critical consumers of electronic media serves as an effective preventative strategy.

However, simple exposure to sexualized media content does not automatically override the foundational values absorbed from families, schools, religious institutions, and respected mentors. Longitudinal research tracking youth cohorts is necessary to clarify how media portrayals of sexuality are integrated into adolescent belief systems regarding the risks and rewards of sexual activity, as well as their behavioural intentions. Future studies should systematically account for confounding variables, including parental mediation strategies, the depth of adolescent media literacy, identification with fictional characters or celebrities, peer norms, and the individual's cognitive appraisal of health-risk behaviours.

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Exploring Attitudes toward Sex Education: A Comparative Study of Youth and Elders across Church Denominations in Aizawl City

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Abstract

Sex education, often known as family life education, is the process by which people learn about sex. It offers information about human reproduction, sexual anatomy, emotional relationships, sexual health, unintended pregnancy, immature sexual relationships, reproductive rights and duties, and other facets of human sexual behaviour. This paper is a report of a study aimed to find out and compare attitude towards sex education among youths and elders in different church denominations in Aizawl city. The sample consists of 5 females and 5 male youths from each denomination and 3 elders from each denomination (7 church denominations) respectively. The study reveals positive attitude towards sex education among church members, regardless of gender. Younger members are open to learning about it, indicating growing awareness and changing societal perspectives. Elders of other churches also have a generally positive outlook, with no significant opposition. This suggests a shift from traditional resistance to a more tolerant attitude, possibly due to contemporary issues, health consciousness, and better educational initiatives. This suggests sex education is becoming a more common topic in churches.

Keywords: Sex Education, Attitude, Church Denominations.

Introduction:

All living things have sex, which is a universal phenomenon. Sex education, often known as family life education, is the process by which people learn about sex. It offers information about human reproduction, sexual anatomy, emotional relationships, sexual health, unintended pregnancy, immature sexual relationships, reproductive rights and duties, and other facets of human sexual behaviour. Emotional relationships and obligations, human sexual anatomy, sexual activity, sexual reproduction, age of consent, reproductive health, reproductive rights, safe sex, birth control, and sexual abstinence are all topics covered in sex education. (Neha, 2021).

Society's duty is to give children a platform to learn about themselves, both physically and emotionally, as well as their roles and obligations towards their families, society, and each other, in addition to teaching the academic components of various courses.

Christian education about sexuality is based on the revelation that God created humankind to be male and female, each bearing fully his image (Genesis 1:26, 27). The distinction between males and females from birth has significant ramifications. Understanding and celebrating who we are as God created us should be the goals of sexuality education. According to Miller (2024), biblically based sex education has a major impact on students' academic achievement; however the results differ for male and female students. This method is more beneficial to female students academically since it is consistent with their values and religious beliefs, which may lessen the tension and anxiety that comes with having opposing worldviews.

Rationale of the Study:

Church members frequently have powerful positions in their communities, and their opinions can help or hurt the adoption of sex education initiatives. While some denominations may see sex education as a danger to traditional values or as a promotion of promiscuity, others may see it as an essential tool in the fight against problems. Examining these differences in viewpoints can shed light on the larger social issues and present chances to implement comprehensive sex education that takes into account cultural and religious sensitivity. Policymakers, educators, and religious leaders working to create and carry out successful sex education programs in Aizawl City must have a thorough understanding of different viewpoints. Stakeholders may encourage discussion, clear up misunderstandings, and advance a more knowledgeable and comprehensive approach to sex education by recognizing the underlying beliefs and concerns of various Christian groups. By bridging the gap between religious principles and the public health imperative, this study can improve community well-being while honoring the community's spiritual and cultural identity.

Statement of the Problem:

Attitude towards Sex Education among Youths and Elders in Different Church Denominations in Aizawl City

Objectives of the Study:

1. To find out the attitude towards sex education among youths in different church denominations
2. To find out the attitude towards sex education among elders in different church denominations
3. To compare the attitude towards sex education between youth and elders in different church denominations

Hypothesis of the Study:

There is no significant difference in the attitudes of church youths and elders in Aizawl City towards sex education.

Operational Definitions:

1. Sex Education: Sex education is the process of providing knowledge and understanding about human sexuality, including anatomy, reproduction, relationships, and sexual health.
2. Attitude: Attitude refers to a person's consistent way of thinking, feeling, and behaving toward a particular object, person, idea, or situation.

3. Church denomination: A church denomination is a distinct religious group within Christianity that has its own organizational structure, doctrine, and worship practices. Examples include Roman Catholicism, Eastern Orthodoxy, and various Protestant groups like Baptists, Methodists, and Lutherans.

Review of Related Literature:

Lalmalsawmzauva (2019), did a research on “Pre-Marital Sex Attitude among Students of Mizoram University”. This study aims to investigate the attitudes of research academics and students at Mizoram University regarding premarital sex. In order to support the widespread belief that younger generations are becoming more liberal in their thinking and more receptive to premarital sex, this study examined "how liberal or conservative" the educated youngsters are. The study found that while 70% of MZU students remained conservative on the subject, 29.8% of them felt that lovers should engage in premarital sex. This demonstrated that the widespread belief that younger generations are more liberal is not entirely accurate.

Lalnunfeli and Malsawmi (2021), conducted a research on the topic ‘A Comparative study on the attitude of Students, Teachers and Community members towards Sex Education at Secondary School level in Mizoram’, it was founded that since secondary school teachers in Mizoram are primarily responsible for teaching sex education, they are typically well-versed in the actual nature of the subject and its significance for teenage pupils. They appear to be aware that sex education can reduce the risk of unintended births, improve healthy relationships between the sexes, and stop the spread of HIV and other sexually transmitted diseases. The majority of educators understand the need of teaching students about the fundamentals of human reproduction, thus it is not surprising that the current study also discovered that instructors have a more positive attitude than community members.

Kumar and Mittal (2015), conducted a study on “A Study of Attitude towards Sex Education of College Going Students in Relation to Their Home Environment”. The purpose of the study was to examine and contrast college-bound students' attitudes on sex education and explore how these attitudes relate to their home environments. Students attending college have a positive view on sex education. The attitudes of urban female students towards sex education have been overwhelmingly positive. College-bound students' attitudes on sex have been influenced by their location. it has been discovered that metropolitan pupils have a more positive attitude on sex education. Rural students' attitudes on sex education were unaffected by sex. Students' attitudes towards sex education have been influenced by their home environment and its aspects.

Toor (2016), did a research on the topic “A Study of the Attitude of Teachers, Parents and Adolescents towards Sex Education.” The purpose of this study is to examine how parents, instructors, and teenagers feel about sex education in connection to a few demographic factors. The sample included 100 teenagers from Punjab's Ludhiana area, 50 parents, and 50 teachers. For this investigation, the descriptive survey method was employed. According to the findings, the majority of teachers have a positive view on sex education. The majority of educators stated that they require specialised training in order to have conversations with pupils about sexuality. The majority of parents thought that sex education will make kids more responsible with their sexual activity. The findings also show that parents'

attitudes towards sex education are unaffected by their financial situation. Compared to girls, boys have a far more positive attitude on sex education.

Sharma, Kandre & Patel (2020), conducted a study “A Study of Sexual Attitude, it’s Bearing to Sexual Knowledge and Strength of Religious Faith amongst College Going Youth in Ahmedabad City”. The current study sought to determine the degree of sexual knowledge and religious belief among college-bound students in Ahmedabad, as well as the impact these factors had on their attitudes towards sex. Of the 299 participants, 48.5% were female and 51.5% were male. It was discovered that people who were male, lived in joint homes, and reported having had sex before the age of 15 knew more about sex. Individuals with a liberal attitude towards sex were those who reported a history of sexual exposure and those from joint households. There was a substantial ($p < 0.05$) correlation between the knowledge and attitude scores on the SCSRFQ and SKAQ. In addition to having superior knowledge and a strong religious belief, students with a liberal attitude towards sex also had superior knowledge.

Methodology:

Method of the Study:

The present study is descriptive in nature. Quantitative method was used for the analysis of data.

Population of the Study:

The population of the study will comprise of all the members of the different denominations of church in Aizawl City.

Sample of the Study:

The sample will be collected from the youths and elders from different denominations of church in Aizawl through Purposive Sampling Method. The sample consists of 5 females and 5 male youths in each denomination and 3 elders from each denomination respectively.

A table showing the different denominations of church in Aizawl City where the data was collected.

Serial No.	Church	Male	Female	Church Elders
1	Presbyterian Church of India (PCI)	5	5	3
2	Salvation Army	5	5	3
3	United Pentecostal Church (UPC)	5	5	3
4	Fundamental Baptist	5	5	3
5	Baptist Church of Mizoram (BCM)	5	5	3
6	Roman Catholic Church	5	5	3
7	Isua Krista Kohhran (IKK)	5	5	3

Tool Used:

In order to find out the attitude of sex education among church members in different church denominations in Aizawl city, the researcher will employ an “Attitude scale towards sex education” developed by DR (Smt.) Usha Mitra.

Analysis of Data:

The data were analyzed quantitatively using statistics like mean, standard deviation, and t-test for comparison in terms of gender and different church denominations.

Results and Findings:

Objective No.1: To find out the attitude towards sex education among youths in different church denominations

Table 1:

A table showing the attitude towards sex education among youths in different church denominations

Serial Number	Score Range	Staircase Grade	Interpretation	Church Denominations						
				PCI	Salvation Army	UPC	Fundamental Baptist	BCM	Roman Catholic	IKK
1	Above 129	9	Very High Attitude towards Sex Education	7 (70 %)	9 (90%)	10 (100 %)	9 (90%)	10 (100 %)	10 (100%)	10 (100 %)
	120-129									
2	110-119	8	High Attitude towards Sex Education	3 (30 %)	1 (10%)		1 (10%)			
	100-109	7								
3	90-99	6	Moderate Attitude towards Sex Education							
	80-89	5								
	70-79	4								
4	60-69	3	Low Attitude towards Sex Education							
	50-59	2								
5	40-49	1	Very Low Attitude towards Sex Education							
	Below 40									

With a score above 129, the majority of young people from all denominations are classified as having a Very High Attitude toward Sex Education (Stanine Grade 9). The data unequivocally shows that young people in every faith denomination examined had a strong, favorable attitude toward sex education. The IKK, BCM, Roman Catholic, and Fundamental Baptist groups all displayed consistently highly positive sentiments. Although a minority scored somewhat lower (still in the high range), the PCI and Salvation Army denominations likewise displayed a plurality with very high attitudes. None of the participants had moderate, low, or very low attitudes toward sex education, as indicated by their scores outside of stanine grades 1–7.

Objective No.2: To find out the attitude towards sex education among elders in different church denominations

Table 2:

A table showing the attitude towards sex education among church elders in different church denominations

Serial Number	Score Range	Stanine Grade	Interpretation	Church Denominations						
				PCI	Salvation Army	UPC	Fundamental Baptist	BCM	Roman Catholic	IKK
1	Above 129	9	Very High Attitude towards Sex Education	1 (33%)	1 (33%)	2 (67%)	3 (100%)	2 (67%)	3 (100%)	2 (67%)
	120-129									
2	110-119	8	High Attitude towards Sex Education	2 (67%)	1 (33%)	1 (33%)		1 (33%)		1 (33%)
	100-109	7			1 (33%)					
3	90-99	6	Moderate Attitude towards Sex Education							
	80-89	5								
	70-79	4								
4	60-69	3	Low Attitude towards Sex Education							
	50-59	2								
5	40-49	1	Very Low Attitude towards Sex Education							
	Below 40									

The study aimed to understand the attitudes of church elders from different denominations toward sex education. Using a scoring system, the results showed that most elders had either a "Very High" or "High" attitude toward sex education.

Every denomination was represented in the "Very High" group (scoring above 129). Notably, a majority of UPC and IKK elders, as well as 100% of Fundamental Baptist, BCM, and Roman Catholic elders, expressed very strong support. This implies that these groups have overwhelmingly positive opinions. Though in fewer numbers, participants from PCI, Salvation Army, UPC, Fundamental Baptist, and IKK were also found in the "High" group (scores 110–119). Only one UPC elder received a score in the next lower level (100–109), which is above-average but has no identifiable label. Overall, the findings show that, with none receiving low or extremely low scores, elders from different churches have a generally good attitude toward sex education. This indicates that the subject is becoming more and more accepted across denominations.

Objective No.3: To compare the attitude towards sex education between youth and elders in different church denominations

Hypothesis 1: There is no significant difference in the attitudes of church youth leaders and elders in Aizawl City towards sex education.

Table 3:

A table showing the attitude towards sex education between youth and elders in different church denominations

Age	Number of Church Members	Mean	Standard Deviation (SD)	t' value	df	Significance Level
Youth	70	131.42	8.2	1.55	89	Not Significant
Elders	21	120.9	5.64			

When it comes to views regarding sex education, youth (Mean = 131.42, SD = 8.2) score significantly higher on average than elders (Mean = 120.9, SD = 5.64). The observed difference between youth and elders may have happened by accident and does not meet the threshold of statistical significance (typically $p > 0.05$), as shown by the result's "Not Significant" label. As a result, the first null hypothesis—that there is no discernible difference between the views of Aizawl City elders and church youth leaders about sex education—is accepted.

Discussion of Results:

According to the averages, the youth seem to have a more positive attitude toward sex education than the seniors, but the t-test indicates that this difference is not statistically significant, so we cannot be certain that the groups differ based just on this sample. The significant mean difference, however, calls for a close examination of the data to look for any potential errors or anomalies. According

to the data, there is a definite tendency of teenagers and elders from various church groups having favorable opinions on sex education. This implies that, even within religious societies, younger church members are very receptive to learning about and talking about sex education, which may be a reflection of growing awareness and shifting societal perspectives. In a similar vein, the elders of other churches also displayed a generally upbeat outlook. Crucially, none of them were classified as low or extremely low, suggesting that senior church members have little opposition to sex education. This reflects a shift from traditional reluctance to a more accepting stance on the topic, which may be influenced by modern challenges, health awareness, and improved education efforts.

Conclusion:

These results collectively imply that sex education is becoming a more common topic of discussion in churches, with both younger and older members expressing interest in it. This increasing acceptability across denominations and age groups shows that faith-based organizations are willing to support more thorough instruction on the topic. According to the data, church members no longer consider sex education to be a taboo subject. Rather, it is becoming more and more recognized as an important and necessary component of individual and collective growth, suggesting a constructive change in perspective within religious contexts. It is possible that older persons require and have access to additional knowledge regarding the physiological and sexual changes associated with aging. This outcome can be connected to the fact that this topic is not included in the curriculum and is shunned in our nation's sociocultural environment. Furthermore, the results of this investigation are in line with earlier research showing older persons were more conservative than younger people (Kiziltepe, 2022).

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English Language Proficiency Among the Secondary Students of Chümoukedima District of Nagaland

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Abstract

Language proficiency plays a very important role in the academic, social, and professional development of individuals. It refers to an individual's ability in using language skills such as listening, speaking, reading, and writing for meaningful communication. English language proficiency helps learners improve their comprehension, communication skills, critical thinking, and confidence in various educational settings. Students with higher proficiency in English are able to perform better in academics and participate actively in classroom activities. The paper studies the English language proficiency among secondary school students in the Chümoukedima District of Nagaland, with specific comparisons based on gender, locality, and type of school. A sample of 200 secondary school students were selected from various schools of Chümoukedima district through simple random sampling technique. Data were collected using a standardized English language proficiency test. The collected data were analyzed using mean, standard deviation, and t-test to test the formulated null hypotheses. The findings revealed significant differences in English language proficiency with regard to gender, where females performed significantly better than males leading to the rejection of the null hypothesis. With regard to locality, no significant difference was found between urban and rural students, and the null hypothesis was accepted. A significant difference was found between students studying in private and government schools, resulting in rejection of the null hypothesis. The findings suggest the need for improving English language teaching practices, especially in government schools, and providing equal academic support to enhance proficiency levels among all secondary school students.

Keywords: English language proficiency, secondary school students, gender, locality, private and government schools, Chümoukedima district, Nagaland

Introduction

Language proficiency plays a very important role in the academic, social, and professional development of an individual. It refers to an individual's ability to use language skills such as listening, speaking, reading, and writing for meaningful communication. English language proficiency helps learners improve their comprehension, communication skills, critical thinking, and confidence in various educational settings. These language skills are interrelated and contribute to the overall language development of learners. Reading helps students improve comprehension and vocabulary,

writing enhances expression of ideas. As it not only enables us to express our thoughts and beliefs but also acts as a tool for learning and an effective agent to enhance understanding (Singh and Geeta, 2021). Proficiency is very essential to become successful in career building in English language because English is considered to be the spectacle to see the world (Dhaka, 2023). English has become an important global language and plays a significant role in education, communication, and professional growth (Agnihotri, 2001). English has become an important international language, widely used in different fields and professions and is also taught in schools and universities in both developed and developing countries. Thus, it has become the most spoken language around the globe (Tangeme, 2022). Proficiency in English language positively influence an individual's life as it opens doors to opportunity, knowledge, and growth. It also provides a window to a global spectrum of entertainment, information, and helps people understand cultures effectively. English language proficiency is defined as the degree of a learner's skill with which a learner can use a language, such as how well a learner can read, write, speak or understand a language. In addition, it also refers to a learner's skill in using the English language for a specific purpose e.g.-academic or occupational purpose. English proficiency may be measured through the use of proficiency test such as TOEFL, TOEIC, GRE, and IELTS etc (Hossain, 2018). However, the level of proficiency varies due to factors such as gender, locality and type of school (Vincy and D'Souza, 2023). Differences in locality, classroom and outside the classroom exposure and type of school also impact learning outcomes (Meganathan, 2017). At the secondary school level, English language proficiency forms the foundation for advanced learning and effective communication skills. In the educational context of India, English is generally taught as a second language, and students often face challenges in mastering listening, speaking, reading, and writing skills. (Qayoom, Saleem & Mansoor, 2021). Singh and Geeta (2021) stated that language proficiency requires not only knowledge of a language but also mastery of the four basic language skills—listening, speaking, reading, and writing. True proficiency involves the ability to use these skills effectively. Therefore, we have to understand the factors that affects English language proficiency is necessary for improving teaching-learning practices and ensuring better educational outcomes. Several studies have examined institutional influences on language development, particularly differences between private and government schools. Research conducted in developing educational contexts indicates that private school students often demonstrate high level of language proficiency due to greater exposure to English, improved instructional resources, and communicative teaching practices (Altinyelken, 2010; ASER, 2022). However, evidence also suggests that government school students show strong motivation to improve their English language proficiency when provided with adequate instructional support and learner-centered teaching strategies (NCERT, 2021).

Review of Related Literature

Bachman (1990) defines that the language proficiency is the ability to use language in real-life communication. Gorman (1970) argued that students with limited English proficiency often face difficulties in understanding classroom instruction, which negatively impacts their learning outcomes. English is an important language in India as it has become the globally accepted language. Maleki and Zangani (2007) described proficiency as an individual's level of competence in a specific area, which determines how effectively they can function in actual language-use situations. Sahragard and Bahardo's (2009) investigation of students studying in English language and literature revealed that students who are more interested and competent in the English language are more successful in their career. Mahindroo (2014) studied on Language proficiency of English among higher secondary learners in relation to locality with an aim to measure the language proficiency in English among

students with the help of Language Proficiency Test in English and compare with English Medium and Hindi Medium students. The sample of the study comprised of the six hundred learners. It was descriptive research in nature where survey method was employed. The data were collected by the investigator by personally visiting and administration of the tests. The findings revealed that rural and urban students differ significantly from each other in English Language Proficiency. While the urban students performed better as compared to rural students. Hossain (2018) investigated on English language proficiency level among the secondary school students in relation to gender. The aim of the study was to find out the difference in proficiency level between male and female students. The sample comprised of two hundred secondary students- hundred males and females respectively. The study revealed that there is no significant relationship of English language proficiency level with regard to gender of the students. Singh & Geeta (2021) studied that language is present across the curriculum and findings revealed that language across curriculum approach ensures holistic development of learners. Agarwal's (2024) investigated on the dominance of English language proficiency in all domains of Education. It was a survey-based study which revealed that the male trainee teachers have significantly higher level of English Language Proficiency than the Female trainee teachers. Dhaka (2023) studied the English language proficiency among secondary school students with an objective to find out the difference in English language proficiency level among secondary school students in relation to their gender and locality on a sample of hundred students. The findings revealed that there is no significant difference in English Language Proficiency level with respect to gender and locality of the students but there is significant difference between urban boys and urban girls secondary school students. Sangeeta et al. (2024) conducted a study on English language proficiency of 8th grade students of Sirsa District. The sample selected is two hundred students from private and government schools with equal number of males and females. It is found that Private school students performed better than the government school students and that the female students performed better than the male students. Debnath (2024) investigated on English language proficiency among secondary school students in India plays an important role in education, and future employment opportunities.

Rationale of the study

English language proficiency is closely connected with the school curriculum because English is not only taught as a subject but also used as a medium of instruction in many schools. In the context of Nagaland, English occupies significant position in both education and administration. English is the official language of Nagaland and is widely used for official communication, administration, education, and legal purposes. The Nagaland Legislative Assembly declared English as the official language of the state in 1967. English also serves as the medium of instruction in most schools and higher educational institutions in the state. The importance of English in Nagaland is closely linked to the linguistic diversity of the state. Nagaland is home to several tribes, each having its own distinct language or dialect. Since there is no single common tribal language spoken throughout the state, English functions as a link language among different communities. Due to this multilingual situation, the state government has preferred English as the medium of instruction in schools and for official purposes.

The school curriculum in Nagaland also reflects the importance of English language learning. Most schools affiliated with the Nagaland Board of School Education (NBSE), as well as CBSE-affiliated schools, use English as the medium of instruction, particularly at the secondary and higher secondary levels. English is taught as a compulsory subject. However, students studying in different types of schools and locations may not always receive the similar levels of exposure, teaching

methods, or learning support in English. Differences in school facilities, teacher availability, home environment, and access to learning resources may influence students' proficiency in English Language. Although English is a compulsory subject in schools, there is limited research focusing specifically on the proficiency in English language of secondary school students in Chümoukedima District. It is important to understand whether factors such as gender, school location (urban or rural), and type of school (private or government) make any difference in students' English language performance. Identifying these differences can help teachers, school administrators, and policymakers improve teaching strategies and provide better support where needed. Therefore, the research is conducted to study the English language proficiency among the secondary school students in Chümoukedima District. The findings of this study will help in understanding the current level of students' English language proficiency and in suggesting ways to strengthen English language learning in the district.

Objectives of the Study

1. To assess the level of English language proficiency of secondary school students of Chümoukedima District.
2. To study English language proficiency of secondary school students with regard to Gender.
3. To study English language proficiency of secondary school students with regard to Locality.
4. To study English language proficiency of secondary school students with regard to Type of School.

Research Question

What is the level of the level of English language proficiency of secondary school students of Chümoukedima District?

Hypothesis

H₀₁: There is no significant difference in English language proficiency of secondary school students with regard to Gender.

H₀₂: There is no significant difference in English language proficiency of secondary school students with regard to Locality.

H₀₃: There is no significant difference in English language proficiency of secondary school students with regard to Type of School.

Delimitations

The present study English language proficiency among the secondary students of Chümoukedima district of Nagaland is confined to reading and writing only.

Research Methodology

In the present study, data were analysed using both descriptive and inferential statistics to interpret the English language proficiency level of secondary school students.

Population of the study

The population includes all the secondary school students enrolled in class IX (2024-2025) in the Chümoukedima district of Nagaland.

Sample

Table 1: Represent the sample

Type of School	Locality	Number of Students	Total
Government Schools	Urban	50	100
	Rural	50	
Private Schools	Urban	50	100
	Rural	50	
Grand Total			200

The study is based on a sample of 200 students selected through the simple random sampling technique. The sample comprised 100 students from government schools, including 50 urban and 50 rural students, 100 students from private schools, including 50 urban and 50 rural students.

Tools and Technique of collecting data

In the present study, *English Language Proficiency Test* developed by K. S. Mishra and Ruchi Dubey for assessing the English language proficiency of secondary school students is administered. The test consists of 56 items designed to measure the overall English language proficiency of the students. The tool is standardized and suitable for assessing English language proficiency at the secondary school level, which it does using mean, standard deviation, and independent samples *t*-test.

Reliability and Validity

Split half and Kuder Richardson reliability coefficient of the test have been found to be 0.85 and 0.84 respectively (N=100), which are significant at 0.01 level of significance. Face Validity has been found by asking experts belonging to the field of Education and English. Concurrent validity has been found by correlating by English Language Proficiency Test scores and English marks in U.P. Board High School Examination of the students. It was found to be .50.

Procedure for collecting data

Data were collected by visiting the school personally. Due permission was obtained from the authorities of the school. The students were explained the aim of the research and assured its confidentiality. After building rapport with the students, data were collected.

Data analysis

Descriptive statistics such as mean, standard deviation, frequency, and percentage were used to summarize and present the data systematically. The mean was used to determine the average level of English language proficiency of the students, while standard deviation was used to measure the variability or dispersion of scores from the mean. Frequency and percentage were used to classify students into different proficiency levels and to show the distribution of respondents across categories. Further, the Mean $\pm$ Standard Deviation method was used to establish norms for categorizing students into low, moderate, and high proficiency levels. Inferential statistics, specifically the t-test, was used to compare the English language proficiency of students across different groups such as gender, locality, and type of institution, and to determine whether the observed differences were statistically significant at the 0.05 level of significance. Objective wise analysis and interpretation is described below:

Objective 1: To assess the level of English language proficiency of secondary school students of Chümoukedima District.

Research Question 1: What is the level of the level of English language proficiency of secondary school students of Chümoukedima District?

Table 2.0: Showing the scores obtained by Secondary school students in English Language Proficiency

Sl. No	Raw Score	No of students	Percentage	Level of Proficiency
1	48 & above	10	5	Extremely Proficiency
2	42 to 47	12	6	Highly Proficiency
3	35 to 41	40	20	Above Average Proficiency
4	26 to 34	84	42	Average Proficiency
5	19 to 25	38	19	Below Average Proficiency
6	14 to 18	12	6	Low Proficiency
7	14 & Below	4	2	Extremely Low Proficiency

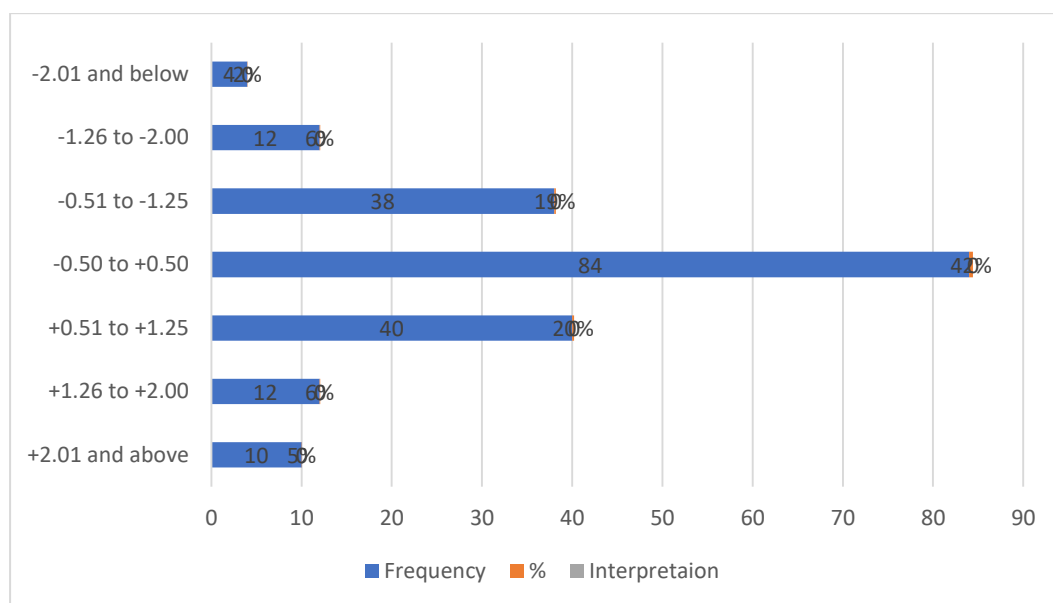


Figure 1: Represents the scores obtained by Secondary school students in English Language Proficiency

Interpretation:

Table 2.0 and Figure 1 represent the overall findings that much of the students possess average English language proficiency, with fewer students scoring very high and very low levels. This suggests that the general proficiency level is satisfactory, but there is need for improvement among students with lower level of English language proficiency the English language proficiency levels of 200 secondary school students based on their test scores. Most of the students are found to have an average English proficiency, as 84 (42%) students scored in the average score range (26–34). Number of 40 (20%) students showed above average proficiency, while 12 (6%) students showed high proficiency, and 10 (5%) students showed extremely high proficiency. On the lower side, 38 (19%) students were in the below average proficiency level, showing that they need improvement in English skills. Similarly, 12 (6%) students had low proficiency, and only 4 (2%) students had extremely low proficiency, indicating very weak English language ability.

Table 2.1: Presenting the overall Mean and Standard Deviation of English Language Proficiency of Secondary School Students

Variable	N	Mean	SD
English Language Proficiency	200	30.08	8.48

Interpretation:

Table 2.1 representing overall mean score of English language proficiency of the 200 secondary school students was 30.08, with a standard deviation of 8.48. This indicates that the average level of English language proficiency of the students is moderate, and the variation in scores

shows a moderate spread around the mean, suggesting differences in proficiency levels among the students.

Objective 2: To study English language proficiency of secondary school students with regard to Gender.

H₀₁: There is no significance difference in English language proficiency of secondary school students with regard to Gender

Table 2.1: Comparison of English Language Proficiency of the students with Regard to Gender

Gender	N	Mean	SD	P value	t value	Remarks
Male	100	28.34	8.77	0.0056	2.80	Significant
Female	100	31.82	8.82			

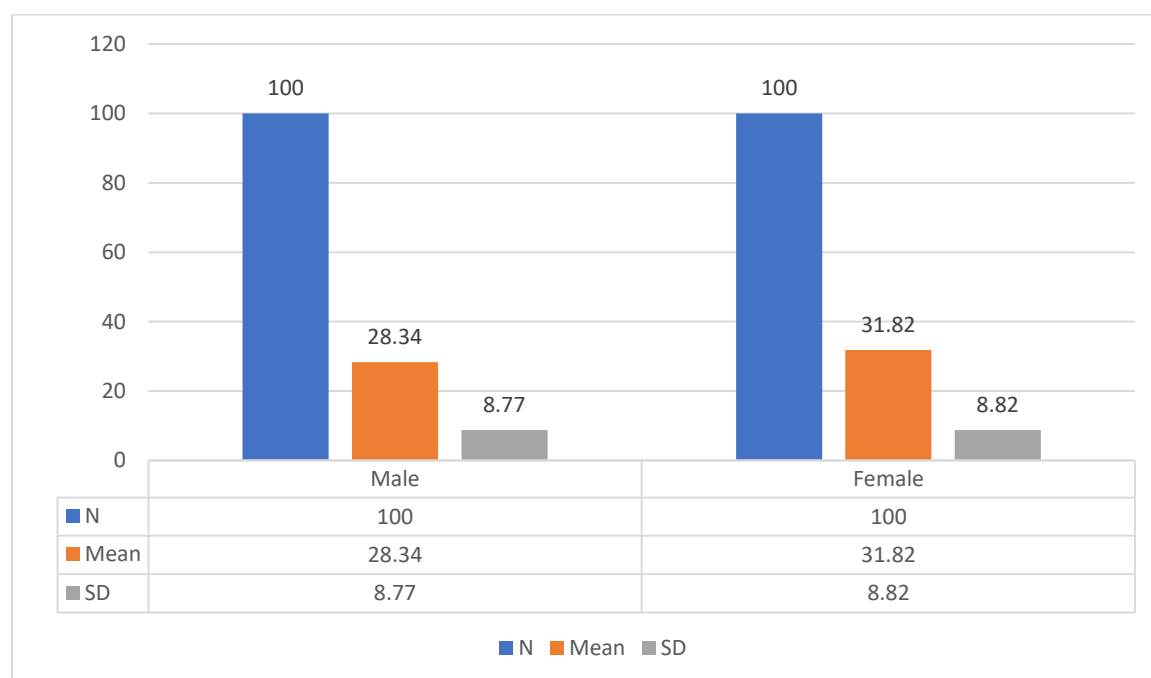


Figure 2: Represents the comparison of English Language Proficiency of the students with Regard to Gender

Interpretation:

Table 2.1 and Figure 2 indicated that female students scored higher than male students in English language proficiency. The difference is statistically significant ($p < 0.05$). This indicates that gender has a significant influence, with females outperforming males leading to the rejection of the null hypothesis. It aligns with the results found by (Agarwal, 2023) while contradicts to the results found by (Dhaka, 2023; Hossain 2018).

Objective 2: To study English language proficiency of secondary school students with regard to Locality

H₀₂: There is no significance difference in English language proficiency of secondary school students with regard to Locality

Table 3: Comparison of English Language Proficiency of the students with Regard to Locality

Locality	N	Mean	SD	P value	t value	Remarks
Rural	100	29.98	7.98	0.87	0.16	Not significant
Urban	100	30.18	9.85			

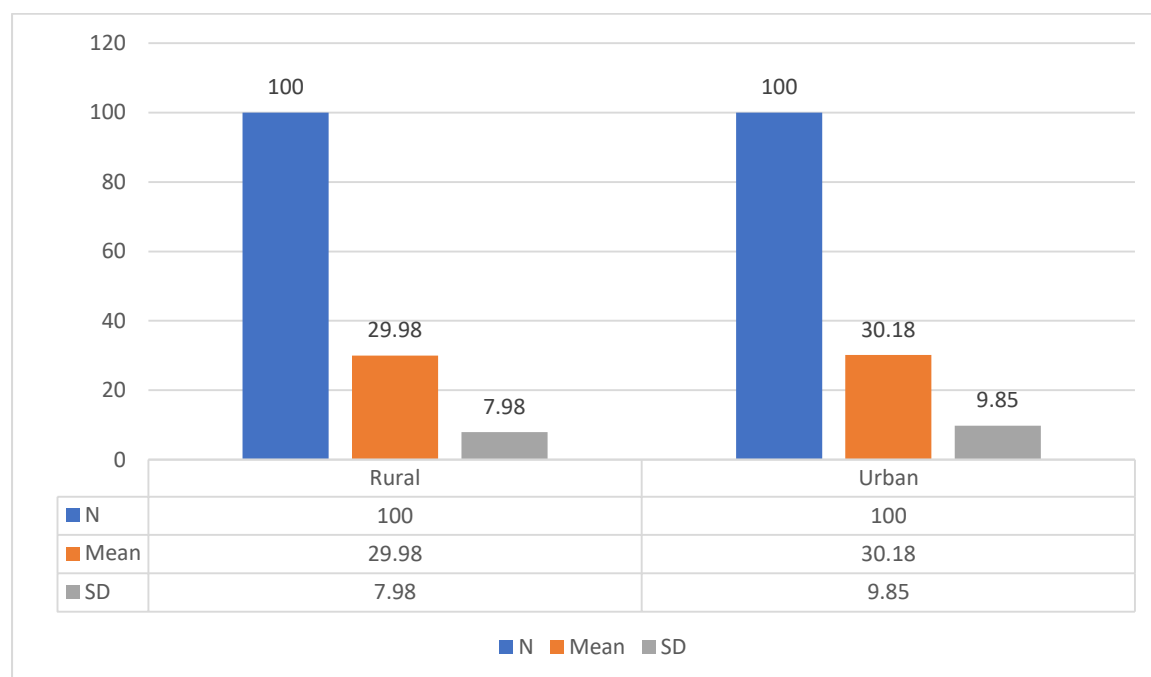


Figure 3 Represents the comparison of English Language Proficiency of the students with Regard to Locality

Interpretation:

Table 3 and figure 3 shows that Urban students scored slightly higher than rural students; however, the difference is not statistically significant ($p > 0.05$). This suggests that locality does not significantly affect English language proficiency and therefore the null hypothesis is accepted. (Patum & Tok, 2025; Fu & Liu 2024; Dhaka, 2023; Saikia, 2018) also found that there is no significant difference in English language proficiency between rural and urban secondary school students.

Objective 3: To study English language proficiency of secondary school students with regard to Type of School

H₀₃: There is no significance difference in English language proficiency of secondary school students with regard to Type of School

Table 4: Comparison of English Language Proficiency with Regard to Type of School

Type	N	Mean	SD	P value	t value	Remarks
Government	100	27.26	7.20	< 0.001	4.69	Significant
Private	100	32.90	9.64			

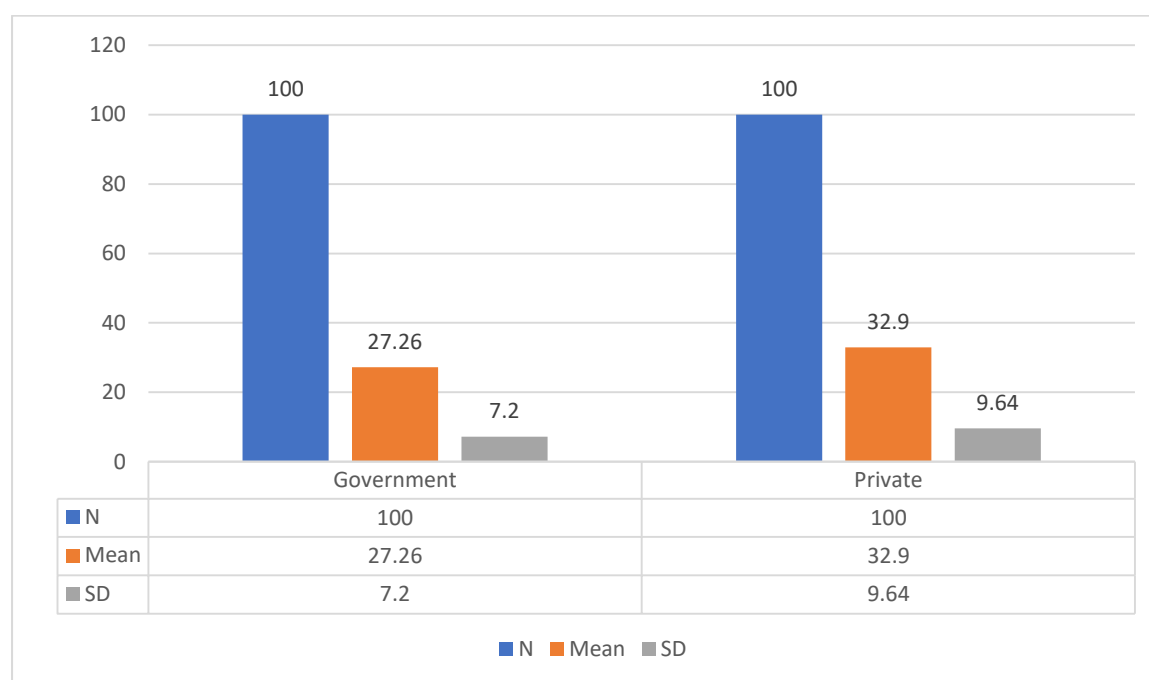


Figure 4: Comparison of English Language Proficiency with Regard to Type of School

Interpretation:

Table 4 and Figure 4 indicates that private school students scored significantly higher than government school students. The difference is highly significant, indicating that type of institution plays a major role in English language proficiency. Private school students perform significantly better than government school students leading in rejection of the null hypothesis. The results are in line with the studies conducted by (Kumar, 2021; Sangeeta et al., 2024; Patum & Tok 2025)

Findings of the study

The major findings along with the objectives of the study are presented below:

- It is found that out of 200 hundred, 84 students which represents 42% have average level of proficiency. while 12 (6%) students have high and 10 (5%) students have extremely high level of proficiency. On the other side, 38 (5%) students which is were found having below average, 12 (6%) students had low and only 4 students had extremely low proficiency, showing that they need improvement in English language proficiency.
- This finding shows that female students performed better in English language proficiency compared to male students.
- It is found that the difference between urban and rural secondary students is not statistically significant. This suggests that locality does not significantly affect English language proficiency
- Private school students perform significantly better than government school students resulting in rejection of the null hypothesis.

Conclusion

The present study examined the level of English language proficiency among secondary school students and analyzed differences based on gender, locality, and type of institution. The findings reveal several important patterns that are discussed below in relation to the objectives of the study. The overall analysis indicates that the level of English language proficiency among secondary school students is moderate. This suggests that while students possess a basic level of proficiency in English, there is considerable scope for improvement. The relatively high standard deviation further indicates variability in proficiency levels, pointing toward unequal learning outcomes among students. With regard to gender, the study found that female students significantly outperform male students in English language proficiency. A significant finding of the study is the impact of the type of institution, where private school students performed significantly better than government school students. This may be due to better infrastructure, availability of learning resources, smaller class sizes, and greater emphasis on English language instruction in private schools. The difference highlights the role of institutional support in shaping students' language proficiency.

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Higher-Order Thinking in Higher Education: A Conceptual Analysis

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Abstract

Higher-Order Thinking (HOT) is an essential element of contemporary education, particularly in Higher Education Institutions (HEIs), where students must cultivate critical thinking, problem-solving, and creativity to succeed in an ever more advanced world. It is essential to promote critical and innovative thinking in 21st-century education to enhance students' future global competence in technology and interdisciplinary studies. This paper focuses on the methods used to promote HOT, such as inquiry-based learning (IBL), problem-based learning (PBL), flipped classrooms, authentic assessments, and technology integration. The study also calls for curriculum reforms and faculty development at HEIs to bring in HOT to better adapt students to the HEI system to maximise their academic and professional performances. Bridging the gap for practitioners, this paper helps build competency-based, student-centric learning spaces in higher education by discussing barriers and opportunities that HOT create.

Keywords: Higher-Order Thinking (HOT), Higher Education Institutions (HEIs), Bloom's Taxonomy, 21st-Century Skills, Pedagogy.

Introduction

The importance of higher-order thinking (HOT) has been increasingly recognized as integral to higher education, which promotes educational attainment, innovation, and the development of skills for solving complex problems. While LOTS (lower-order thinking) focus on memorization, recall, and comprehension, HOT promotes deeper cognitive skills such as analysis, evaluation, and synthesis (Richland & Simms, 2015). The transition from LOTS to HOT is a shift in educational philosophy from passive styles of learning to more active and student-driven pedagogies (Brookhart, 2010). As the world transforms in unprecedented ways, the need for HOT in higher education, where critical thinking and problem-solving skills are requisite for professional and personal life, has become a pressing need (Barnett & Francis, 2012).

The traditional method of education has always focused on rote memorization, with students learning through memorizing facts—which are never put into question, nor challenged, nor presented for real-world application (Shukla & Dungsungnoen, 2016). This approach does not sufficiently equip learners with the skills needed in today's workplace, where adaptability, creativity, and analytical reasoning are highly sought after (Ball & Garton, 2005).

In addition, the digital age has changed not just how we learn but also how we share and learn from each other, which means our students need a critical eye when confronted with the large volume of information available online (McLoughlin & Mynard, 2009). The growing trends of artificial

intelligence, automation, and complexity across domains further highlight the importance of higher-level thinking for students to compete for jobs in a global, technology-based economy (Kim, Yi, & Hong, 2020). In light of these realities, HOT is no longer a welcome addition to higher education in many models—it is a requirement for achieving academic and professional success (Davies, 2015).

Statement of the problem

Despite the growing international emphasis on higher-order thinking (HOT), its implementation in higher education institutions remains limited by content-heavy curricula, standardized assessments, and lecture-based teaching that encourage rote learning rather than critical analysis, evaluation, and application. Although digital technologies can support interactive and adaptive learning, they are often underutilized for promoting HOT, leaving many students inadequately prepared to apply knowledge meaningfully in real-world contexts. These issues call for a systemic transformation of curricula, faculty training, and assessment methods to integrate HOTs into the higher education experience.

Objectives of the study

1. To assess the theoretical underpinnings of HOT
2. To examine the importance of HOT in HEIs
3. To explore the effects of HOT in HEIs'
4. To provide recommendations for developing pedagogical strategies of HOT in HEIs

Objective 1 Theory Underpinnings of Higher Order Thinking

Higher-order thinking (HOT) has a strong foundation in cognitive and educational theories, including those that describe how learners assimilate, evaluate and generate knowledge that goes beyond rote learning. Many theoretical models have emerged to aid in the understanding and operationalization of HOT in higher education institutions (HEIs) (Newmann, D.B., Tay, L., & Diener, E., 2014). Three of the leading frameworks in this regard are Bloom's Taxonomy, Piaget's Cognitive Development Theory, and Vygotsky's Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD) (Anderson & Krathwohl, 2001; Piaget, 1972; Vygotsky, 1978).

These theoretical models highlight different aspects of HOT; e.g. the structure of knowledge, the evolution of thinking skills with cognitive development, and the role of social interaction in building deeper understanding. Collectively, the theories presented provide a dynamic framework for engaging with higher-order thinking in HEIs, and ensuring students acquire the critical thinking, problem-solving, and creativity skills that underpin success in further education, professional practice, and the workforce (Barnett & Francis, 2012).

Bloom's Taxonomy and Revised Bloom's Taxonomy

Bloom's revised taxonomy of educational objective serves a guiding framework for curriculum design, instructional practices, and assessment in higher education institutions (HEIs). Adapting courses to go beyond lower-order cognitive tasks (e.g., memorization) to higher-order learning (e.g., critical analysis; creative problem solving) helps prepare students for what they are going to encounter in life (Brookhart, 2010). Studies indicate that students demonstrate greater problem-solving skills, deeper conceptual understanding, and greater academic performance when the learning tasks are organized around Bloom's higher-order domains (Shukla & Dungsungnoen, 2016). Therefore, aligning HEI curricula according to Bloom's Taxonomy leads the students to attain

the cognitive skills necessary for success in emerging interdisciplinary disciplines (Renaud & Murray, 2007).

Piaget's Theory of Cognitive Development

Jean Piaget's Theory of Cognitive Development (1972) gives crucial perspective on how students develop higher-order thinking and the various stages of growth through these stages of intellectual development. Piaget believed that cognitive maturity is an important theoretical basis behind solving problems and analytical reasoning. Unlike younger learners, who usually need tangible experiences to grasp concepts, people in the formal operational stage can handle abstract ideas, think about hypothetical situations, and use logical reasoning to resolve complex issues (Brookhart, 2010). This shift is necessary for higher education as students are expected to conduct critical analysis, research and synthesize knowledge from a vast pool of information (Murtonen & Balloo, 2019). According to Piaget's theory, educators should design learning experience that are challenging enough for students as it gradually moved from concrete examples (or hands-on) to abstract reasoning task (Yuliati & Lestari, 2018).

Vygotsky's Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD)

Cognitive development is a social process, states Vygotsky, as meaningful learning takes place by way of social interaction and collaborative activity (Brookhart, 2010). This reflects modern pedagogical practices that focus on peer learning, group discussions and cooperative problem-solving as effective means of growing HOT (Brierton et al., 2016). Become an active learner through interactive learning environments based on dialogue, debate and knowledge construction (McLoughlin & Mynard, 2009): Research has shown that students who learn in interactive environments display a significant amount of analytical and creative thinking compared to those who learn in isolated environments.

One of the core ideas behind the ZPD is scaffolding, where an instructor supports and builds a student's understanding to perform tasks slightly beyond their current abilities (Vygotsky, 1978). In HEIs, scaffolding can be utilised by implementing structured questioning, guided research projects and feedback-driven learning to promote higher-order cognitive engagement (Alkhatib, 2019).

Enabling collaborative learning spaces based on Vygotsky's learning theory is successful in supporting students' problem-solving, critical reasoning and creative innovation (Kim, Yi, & Hong, 2020). The combination of peer-assisted learning, real-world case studies, and cooperative problem-solving tasks helps create an environment in which students collaboratively construct knowledge, sharpen their reasoning skills, and engage in elevated forms of discourse (Murtonen & Balloo, 2019).

Objective 2 Importance of Higher-Order Thinking in Higher Education

Improving Critical Thinking and Problem-Solving Capabilities

The HOT concept is vital to fostering critical thinking skills and problem-solving abilities, both of which are integral for achieving success academically and in a practical sense. Therefore, HOT persuades students to actively make decisions and think logically, which helps them to weigh up a situation, consider different solutions, and decide what to do. This process includes more than a rote recall of information, and enables greater cognitive engagement and a more complex understanding of intricate issues (Brookhart, 2010). From how to assess the quality of evidence at hand, to how to frame their own position in relation to a body of evidence and the ideas of others, students are

learning to think critically about what is before them, and that they are putting into practice the way they put these skills into action when faced with new problems.

Research studies have shown how HOT can contribute effectively to cognitive skills/abilities especially in the areas of critical thinking, analytical reasoning and problem solving (Shukla & Dungsungnoen, 2016). It has been shown that engaging in higher-order thinking (HOT) practices, like analyzing case studies, solution of complex problems and applying theories in real-world settings, boosts and improves decision-making skills along with cognitive flexibility (Richland & Simms, 2015). Research has also indicated that students engaged in inquiry-based learning and problem-based learning (PBL) show improved retention of knowledge and the ability to apply novel knowledge in unfamiliar contexts (Brierton et al, 2016). Therefore, HOT not only teaches students to excel academically, but also teaches them the cognitive expertise they need to solve complex problems in work settings (Barnett & Francis, 2012).

Enhancing Creativity and Innovation

As a driving force in creativity and innovation, HOT also provides foundational competencies for the interdisciplinary and dynamic 21st-century workforce. Students learn how to generate new ideas and apply existing knowledge in novel ways (both analysis and evaluation) and to innovate (creation) by performing these activities (Ball and Garton, 2005). More than just saying common knowledge, the process described isn't just academic but is also used in problem-solving in the outside world, where the need to be able to think outside the box makes a difference in finding solutions to complex questions. HOT helps students both view issues through multiple lenses and integrate knowledge across domains, important in addressing complex problems that necessitate a grasp of different domains (Kim et al., 2020).

A concrete example where HOT comes into play is when it comes to interdisciplinary projects where students from various fields work together to solve global issues, including climate change, healthcare, and technology. Studies show that students involved in interdisciplinary collaboration are more prepared for developing unique solutions by leveraging different theoretical structures and problem-solving approaches (Vygotsky, 1978). Research shows that HOT practices encouraging in-depth thinking and creative approaches directly relate to the capacity to synthesise different perspectives and formulate new solutions (López & Whittington, 2014). Furthermore, HOT approaches such as design thinking and project-based learning allow students to create prototypes, test theories, and iterate on their ideas, providing inspiration which encourages the role of creativity and innovation (Meyer, 2003).

Educating Students on Global Competencies

HOT skills empower students to navigate the challenges of globalization, such as cross-cultural communication, multinational collaboration, and technological advances (McLoughlin & Mynard, 2009). Hybrid order thinking promotes analytical reasoning and flexibility in thinking, engaging learners so that their efforts can be applied across various contexts and allowing them to devise innovative but contextually appropriate solutions (Ball & Garton, 2005). This flexibility to discern and adapt information is especially needed as students pursue professions where they analyse disparate information, lead interdisciplinary teams, and develop prototypes of social innovation on a scale (Alkhatib, 2019). This allows full HOT, because HOT is the capacity of students today to help solve problems in society locally, but more importantly, allows them to engage with all global problems in mind.

Objective 3 Effects of Higher-Order Thinking on Problem Solving in HEIs

Traditional Teaching Methods

Conventional teaching styles that still prevail in numerous academic institutions pose a threat to the application of HOT in HEIs. Such strategies, which emphasize a lecture-focused instructional format, followed by drill-and-kill memorisation of information, do not facilitate the engagement of cognitive processes needed for HOT (Richland & Simms, 2015). Students in such traditional classrooms remain passive players, with lectures being focused on transmitting content to recipients rather than enabling the analytical, critical, and creative thought processes. This passive instruction dependency creates a need for knowledge to be reproduced instead of applied to complex real-world scenarios (Shukla & Dungsungnoen, 2016).

Moreover, the development of HOT is severely restricted by teacher-centred pedagogy. The content is primarily transferred from faculty (who hold the knowledge) to the students (who are expected to memorize this information and reproduce it in assessments). This approach limits opportunities for inquiry, exploration, and independent thought (in all zones a defining element of HOT; Ball & Garton, 2005). Studies have shown that such pedagogies reinforce surface-level learning over higher-order cognitive skills, the latter necessary for effective problem-solving, decision-making and creative thinking (Heron & Palfreyman, 2023). These limitations necessitate a pedagogical shift from traditional lecture-based models to active learning strategies that foster collaboration, critical thinking, and application of knowledge (McLoughlin & Mynard, 2009).

Standardized Testing & Static Assessment Models

The advent of HOT in HEIs in itself is a direct threat to the fact-based model of assessment over analytical and evaluative reasoning, which remains a dominant factor (Barnett & Francis, 2012). However, standardized tests — the ones used most often to measure student performance — are often MCQs (multiple-choice questions) or short-answer-type tests that assess only basic knowledge recall since creative problem-solving requires advanced cognition. Consequently, these assessments do not evaluate HOT, as they do not address higher-order thinking skills including those of critical thinking, creativity, and innovation (Newmann, 1990).

Likewise, rigid assessment models rooted in heavy summative exam pressure inhibit students from engaging in prolonged sustainable depth learning and comprehensive understanding. Research indicates that to measure HOT, performance-based assessments are significantly more powerful, where students must show that they can analyze, evaluate, and create (Richland & Simms, 2015). Authentic assessments such as case studies, portfolios, presentations, and collaborative projects can provide a better measure of HOT skills in students (Yuliati & Lestari, 2018). Such assessments are more authentic, similar to the real challenges students face, where applying knowledge in complex, real-world situations is required. The lack of teacher training and professional development is a critical barrier to the successful implementation of HOT in [Higher Education Institutions (HEIs)]. Many instructors, especially in traditional academic structures, were trained in pedagogies that rely on lecture and are more content-centred, which do little to facilitate HOT (Vygotsky, 1978).

Continued professional development is essential to help educators be prepared with the tools and strategies to motivate HOT (Brookhart, 2010). HEIs can ensure that instructors gain the required competencies through investing in faculty training, collaborative opportunities, and peer mentorship to prepare instructors to catalyze HOT development in students.

Objective 4 Development of Pedagogical Strategies of HOT in HEIs

Inquiry-Based and Problem-Based Learning (IBL & PBL)

IBL and PBL are powerful pedagogical strategies which encourage students to take ownership of their learning by investigating real-world problems and working to solve complex problems. Both approaches aim to move the focus from being centered around teachers and their delivery methods to making it student-led, where students should be the ones exploring their own questions, the solutions to them and the new understandings that arise as a result of their findings (Richland & Simms, 2015). Within this framework, IBL and PBL promote enhanced cognitive functioning, facilitating the cultivation of higher-level skills vital for higher-order thinking such as critical analysis, synthesis and creative problem-solving (Ball & Garton, 2005).

Research-based learning has a very strong effect on HOT. Similar to IBL, PBL encourages students to formulate research questions, gather applicable data, analyze the information, and use what they have discovered in realistic environments. Research-driven projects prepare students to be problem-solvers, critical thinkers, and able to transfer their learning to new situations (Shukla & Dungsungnoen, 2016). Integrating IBL and PBL into higher education curricula will develop a generation of knowledgeable students capable of applying their knowledge creatively and effectively in their careers (Murtonen & Balloo, 2019).

Flipped Classroom Model

The flipped classroom approach is a radical shift in the paradigm of education, where students are battered with information during classroom time in the conventional method. The traditional approach to teaching is to deliver lectures to students during in-class time and supplement it with assignments at home (Meyer, 2003). This can be especially powerful for higher-order thinking as students access content material on their own time before then analyzing, discussing, and collaborating around the concepts in class.

Previous case studies have established that flipped classrooms could lead to an increase in HOT engagement due to the increased number of opportunities for students to engage with the content and to apply their learning in a supportive environment. According to the study of Abosalem (2016), the students who engaged in a flipped classroom environment improved their analytical mentality and were more capable of assessing and applying information in class interactions. Additionally, this approach promotes peer learning and collaborative problem solving, which are important for achieving higher-order thinking skills (Ball & Garton, 2005).

Authentic and Performance-Based Assessments

Many conventional methods of assessment in post-education focus on memorization and retrieval rather than gauging the capacity of students to engage in higher-order thinking. Conventional assessments focus on factual recall, whereas authentic and performance-based assessments focus on applying knowledge and skills to address problems in real-life situations. Such assessments include activities that require students to bring together and apply their learning in complex, authentic contexts (Newmann, 1990).

Unlike conventional testing, which is often based more on memory than application, true assessments require students to critically interrogate complex data and associate information with conclusions. Implementing rubrics that assess students' different levels of cognitive engagement —

from basic recall to higher-order thinking (HOT)-specific tasks like analysis and creation — ensures students are assessed on their ability to engage in HOT. For instance, using a case study analysis methodology, students must analyze a condition, think of possible solutions, and come up with inventive approaches, which are valuable skills for problem-solving and decision-making in the real world (López & Whittington, 2014). With authentic tasks, learners experience applying critical thinking and creativity to overcome real challenges, preparing them better for career options (Kim et al., 2020).

HOT Development Process with a Focus on Technology Integration

Digital tools and adaptive learning platforms, for example, have the potential to bolster HOT development by enabling more personalized learning experiences and pathways for cognitive depth. Technology-based learning that adapts to individual students' needs contributes to personalized learning: adaptive learning platforms provide students with personalized feedback, customized learning paths, and interactive exercises (McLoughlin & Mynard, 2009) while fostering problem-solving and critical thinking. While students can explore content in those platforms at their own pace, they are also scaffolded in the face of increasing complexity, with clear emphasis on a deep understanding of higher-order cognitive processes.

Training and Development Programs for Faculty

Faculty training and development are critical components of enabling the successful integration of HOT into higher education. While many teachers are very experienced in content delivery, they may not understand how to create and engage in HOT activities. Thus, programs of faculty development are critical to providing instructors with the strategies and tools they need to promote HOT in their classrooms (Brierton et al., 2016). These programs can include faculty exposure to active learning pedagogies that promote HOT (e.g., problem-based learning, flipped classrooms, collaborative teaching) and the methods to measure this correlation.

Aside from formal training, opportunities for collaborative peer mentoring can be an effective means of fostering excellence and innovation in teaching. Teachers can benefit from peers by observing each other, creating co-teaching arrangements, and discussing pedagogy for refining how to elicit and nurture higher-order thinking (Alkhatib, 2019). Additionally, training programs for faculty should focus on the necessity of ongoing professional development, keeping educators up to date with the latest developments in the field of education, like new methods of teaching, latest technological tools, and research on HOT.

Future Research Directions

Future research may focus on the following areas:

1. Examine the effectiveness of HOT-oriented teaching across different disciplines, institutions, and cultural contexts.
2. Compare the impact of inquiry-based learning, problem-based learning, flipped classrooms, and other active-learning strategies on students' HOT skills, engagement, and knowledge retention.
3. Investigate how HOT can be integrated into curriculum design and assessment through authentic, project-based, and performance-based tasks.

4. Explore how cultural background, educational practices, and language influence students' ability to engage in critical thinking and problem-solving.
5. Study the role of artificial intelligence and adaptive-learning tools in providing personalised scaffolding, feedback, and assessment for HOT development.

The implications of HOT for interdisciplinary research is an exciting path for future research. The modern challenges we face — climate change, public health crises, technological innovation — require solutions that draw from multiple disciplines. This study could lead to the establishment of a more comprehensive and insightful educational method that helps better prepare students to meet the demands of a rapidly changing and increasingly interconnected world (Davies, 2015).

Conclusion

As emphasized across the paper, HOT not only grounds students in complex academic problem-solving but also supports cognitive capabilities needed to compete in the global workforce, resulting in adaptable, analytic reasoning and innovative problem-solving (Richland & Simms, 2015). Through theoretical frameworks such as Bloom's Taxonomy, Piaget's Cognitive Development Theory, and Vygotsky's ZPD, HOT offers a foundational scaffold for developing higher-level thinking, and its implementation in diverse pedagogies has proven effective in the enhancement of student outcomes (Ball & Garton, 2005).

To implement HOT in higher education, the essential elements are pedagogical reforms and faculty training programs. This shift from traditional, teacher-centred practices to those that are focused on student learning is what enables new teaching methods, including inquiry-based learning (IBL), problem-based learning (PBL), and flipped classrooms, to promote active cognitive engagement. In addition, relevant assessments and technology incorporation are key to developing learning settings that stimulate higher-order thinking processes and encourage students to use knowledge in situations beyond school (Meyer, 2003).

This study looks into the transformative role that HOT could play at institutional and policy levels in reshaping approaches to teaching, designing curricula and framing assessments in higher education. Policy and educational leaders should not overlook the significance of HOT as it prepares learners to address real-life challenges of the 21st century; therefore, they need to respond by investing in faculty development programs, curriculum to enhance HOT, and digital tools that support HOT (Alkhatib, 2019). The need for HOT as part of the HEIs' curriculum is not just an academic agenda but a socio-economic necessity; as globalization progresses and technology advances at a lightning speed, there is a greater necessity for critical thinking and creativity that would differentiate success or failures in the global market.

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Navigating the Transition from Special to Inclusive Education: Institutional Readiness in Mizoram and Meghalaya under NEP 2020

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Abstract

The National Education Policy 2020 makes inclusion the organising principle of school education in India, yet no study has recorded what that mandate has produced for special schools at institutional level in any North-Eastern state. The present study examined the transition in Mizoram and Meghalaya, asking how far conversion has gone and how ready the survivors are to complete it. Of the 12 institutions still functioning as special schools, 11 schools granted permission for data collection; together they enrolled 569 children and employed 139 teachers. Evidence came from an institutional checklist, direct observation, documentary records and interviews with all 11 heads of institution.

The two states, i.e., Mizoram and Meghalaya, diverged sharply. Of Meghalaya's 9 recognised special schools, 5 (55.6%) had ceased to function as such by the time of data collection, whereas all 8 of Mizoram's remained unchanged. Readiness follows the same line. Meghalaya's survivors rate high on accessibility, programme capacity and financing; Mizoram's, sustained largely by donations, rate partial or low. In neither state, however, did the government appoint special school teachers (appointment was left to the private institutions), nor did recruitment extend beyond an interview. Since both states received an identical mandate simultaneously, the divergence appears to be associated with differences in financing and governance rather than with the national policy itself. A phased transition framework towards inclusion is proposed.

Keywords: inclusive education; NEP 2020; transition readiness; special schools; education policy implementation; Mizoram; Meghalaya

Background of the Study

The Salamanca Statement (UNESCO, 1994) and the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (United Nations, 2006) reframed disability as a mismatch between the learner and an environment not designed to accommodate them, shifting the obligation to adapt from the child to the system. India has followed the same trajectory. The Persons with Disabilities Act, 1995 recognised seven categories of disability and guaranteed free education to the age of 18 (Persons with Disabilities Act, 1995), and the Rights of Persons with Disabilities Act, 2016 extended the schedule to 21 categories while rendering inclusive education a statutory obligation.

NEP 2020 advances beyond both, according the highest priority to the inclusion and equal participation of children with disabilities in the regular schooling system (Ministry of Education, 2020, paras. 6.10–6.12). It does not, however, abolish special schooling: in keeping with the RPwD Act, 2016, children with benchmark disabilities retain the choice of regular or special schooling, while resource centres working with special educators are to support learners with severe or multiple disabilities. That tension is the setting of this enquiry. A policy that places inclusion at the centre of schooling while leaving special schools in existence creates, for a period, two populations: schools that have converted and schools that have not. Which fall into which group, and why, bears directly on the children enrolled in them, and national datasets cannot supply the answer, recording enrolment rather than the institutional fate of the schools concerned.

The North-East Indian Context

Mizoram and Meghalaya form a closely comparable pair: hill states with substantial tribal populations and a long association with Christian missionary schooling, operating under the same centrally sponsored schemes, receiving the NEP 2020 mandate simultaneously, and both reporting high literacy.

Mizoram has approximately 1.10 million people and a literacy rate of 98.2%, the highest in the country, and was declared fully literate in 2025. Its 8 recognised special schools are all urban and enrol 219 children; registered societies manage 6 of them (75%) and 5 (62.5%) depend principally on donations. Meghalaya has approximately 2.97 million people, 79.93% of them rural, and a literacy rate of 94.2%. Its surviving special schools are fewer, older and larger: the 3 studied had operated for 30 to 39 years and enrolled 350 children, against 6 to 35 years and 219 children across Mizoram's.

The distinction that concerns this paper is trajectory rather than scale. Meghalaya's recognised system has contracted from 9 institutions to 4 since NEP 2020, whereas Mizoram's remains at 8.

Review of Related Literature

Ainscow and Miles (2008) hold that inclusion is not achieved by transferring children with disabilities into mainstream classrooms but demands transformation of the system as a whole; a policy altering placement while leaving curriculum, pedagogy, assessment and school culture untouched produces integration rather than inclusion. Florian and Black-Hawkins (2011) extend this to practice, arguing that inclusive pedagogy widens what is available to all learners rather than appending provision for a few. Reviewing international efforts to move from exclusion to inclusion, Ainscow et al. (2013) stressed carefully planned support, the engagement of staff and sustained professional development, and observed that special schools hold expertise and resources that can be used to support change in mainstream schools, so a conversion that merely closes them forfeits capacity the receiving system has yet to develop.

India's difficulty has seldom lain in legislation but consistently in implementation. Sarkar and Kundu (2016) found North-Eastern elementary enrolment growing more slowly than the national average, with a 36.67% shortfall in barrier-free access, aids and appliances at 0.51%, and a national deficit of 204 resource teachers. Devi (2023) reports that provisions permitting enrolment have not yielded functional inclusion, mainstream schools having developed no culture capable of sustaining it. Thomas and Ramakrishna (2020) found government-supported institutions better resourced than privately managed ones, and Ntukidem et al. (2011) showed in Nigeria that provision in special schools varied with the resources available to each, suggesting the mechanism by which a difference in financing becomes a difference in capability.

Capacity for change appears cultivated rather than inherent. Kumar (2023) found structured professional development enhanced teacher effectiveness and adaptability, while Ajdinski (2007) described the consultation, co-teaching and materials adaptation a special educator undertakes in a mainstream setting, none of it covered by the entry qualification. Kaur and Salian (2025) found the obstacles Indian teachers identify concern training, support and materials rather than disposition. For the states examined here, Lianchhawni (2018) found special education in Mizoram held back by too few trained personnel and irregular provision, while Paul (2016) surveyed wider trends; neither could assess readiness for a transition not yet commenced.

Four gaps therefore emerge. No study has documented what NEP 2020 has produced at institutional level in any North-Eastern state, and no comparative analysis across states exists, so conditions accelerating or retarding conversion cannot be distinguished from national circumstances. The readiness of surviving institutions has not been assessed against the standard they must meet, and no transition framework has been formulated for resource-constrained hill states. The present study addresses all four while the institutions concerned still exist to be documented.

Statement of the Problem

The problem has been stated as *“Navigating the Transition from Special to Inclusive Education: Institutional Readiness in Mizoram and Meghalaya under NEP 2020”*.

Research Questions

1. To what extent have the recognised special schools of Mizoram and Meghalaya converted to inclusive provision since NEP 2020?
2. How ready for that conversion are the special schools that remain?
3. Which institutional factors are associated with the differing rates of conversion in the two states?
4. What transition framework does the evidence indicate for resource-constrained contexts?

Research Objectives

1. To document the extent to which the recognised special schools of Mizoram and Meghalaya have converted to inclusive provision under NEP 2020.
2. To assess the institutional readiness of the special schools that remain, against dimensions derived from the NEP 2020 and RPwD Act, 2016 mandates.
3. To identify the institutional factors associated with the differential rate of conversion between the two states.
4. To propose a phased transition framework and practicable recommendations for North-Eastern contexts.

Methodology

Research Design

The enquiry was framed as a descriptive comparative study, with survey as its principal method. The two states maintain a small and countable number of special schools, so sampling was dispensed with: the investigator approached every institution still functioning as a special school and studied each one that granted permission; the figures below are therefore counts rather than estimates. Conversion, counted as a recognised school ceasing to function as a special school, is examined at state-system level, readiness at the level of the individual surviving institution.

Population

Every recognised special school in the two states made up the population. Mizoram's 8 functioning institutions lay across 4 districts and Meghalaya's 4 across 2 districts. One of the 4 Meghalaya schools did not grant permission for data collection, so 3 were studied there. In all, 11 institutions were studied, enrolling 569 children and employing 139 teachers. The conversion denominators are the numbers each State Commissioner recognised as special schools: 8 in Mizoram, 9 in Meghalaya.

Research Instrument

The investigator constructed a checklist covering 9 domains: infrastructure, medium of instruction, learning aids, disabilities served, financial management, student and teacher details, years active, teacher profile and vocational provision. A panel drawn from education, psychology and special education validated it before use. A semi-structured interview schedule, validated by the same panel, elicited the heads' account of institutional functioning; here those interviews serve only to corroborate the documentary record of conversion status, and no interview material is presented as a finding. The Commissioners' returns supplied recognition figures, enrolment and teaching strength.

Data Collection and Method of Analysis

Fieldwork ran from January 2024 to March 2025. Departmental approval was obtained first, after which each State Commissioner authorised access; further clearance in Meghalaya came from Samagra

Shiksha and the Directorate of Social Welfare. Participation was voluntary and informed consent obtained, and the investigator inspected premises and equipment personally at every site. Conversion data were analysed as counts and percentages of each state's recognised system. Readiness was rated high, partial, low or none on each dimension against the provision recorded, these ratings being analytic judgements grounded in the evidence rather than scores from a weighted formula.

Data Analysis and Interpretation

Objective 1: To document the extent to which the recognised special schools of Mizoram and Meghalaya have converted to inclusive provision under NEP 2020.

Table-1

Conversion of Recognised Special Schools Under NEP 2020

State	Recognised special schools*	Still functioning as special schools at data collection	No longer functioning as special schools	% converted
Mizoram	8	8	0	0.0
Meghalaya	9	4	5	55.6
Both states	17	12	5	29.4

*Recognition figures supplied by each state's Commissioner for Persons with Disabilities. A school is counted as converted when it no longer functions as a special school; the provision subsequently received by its children was not traced. Of Meghalaya's 4 functioning schools, 3 granted permission for data collection.

More than half of Meghalaya's recognised system (5 of 9 schools) had ceased to operate as special schools by the time of data collection, whereas Mizoram's did not move at all.

The direction of this finding warrants careful statement because it is readily inverted. The 3 Meghalaya institutions examined are not schools that have converted; they are the survivors, which remained specialised while the greater part of their state's system moved on. Readiness in Meghalaya is therefore assessed on the residue of a system already substantially transformed, and in Mizoram on a system yet to begin. Since both states received an identical mandate at the same moment, the national policy cannot by itself account for the difference, which appears to lie in how each state's institutions are financed and governed.

Objective 2: To assess the institutional readiness of the special schools that remain, against dimensions derived from the NEP 2020 and RPwD Act, 2016 mandates.

Six dimensions were derived from what NEP 2020 and the RPwD Act, 2016 require of an institution serving children with disabilities: a physically accessible environment; programme capacity across a range of disabilities; financing stable enough to sustain provision; adequate qualified staff; governance aligned with the education administration; and the extent of conversion achieved within the state's recognised system.

Table-2

Institutional Readiness Profile of the Special Schools studied

Readiness dimension	Mizoram (n = 8)	Meghalaya (n = 3)
Physical accessibility	Partial. Barrier-free access and gender-segregated sanitation incomplete; playgrounds at some sites	High. Both complete; playgrounds at most sites
Programme capacity	Low. Dedicated space at half the sites; narrow intake; specific learning disabilities unserved	High. Dedicated space at every site; broad intake across disability categories
Financial stability	Low. Philanthropic base; fees levied at some sites; departmental assistance at one	High. Departmental grant base, philanthropic income

Readiness dimension	Mizoram (n = 8)	Meghalaya (n = 3)
		supplementary; no fees
Human resource depth	Low. Small, very unevenly distributed establishments; advanced qualification and therapeutic staffing almost absent	Partial. Larger, evenly distributed; some advanced qualification; therapeutic staffing negligible
Governance alignment	Low. Predominantly society-managed, outside departmental authority; interview-only recruitment	Partial. Committee-managed within a financed framework; interview-only recruitment
Conversion achieved (state system)	None. All 8 retain special-school status	High. 5 of the state's 9 recognised schools already converted

* Ratings are analytic judgements against the mandate, grounded in provision recorded on the institutional checklist. Conversion achieved is rated for each state's recognised system as a whole rather than for the institutions studied.

Meghalaya rates high on four dimensions and partial on two; Mizoram rates partial on one, low on four and none on the sixth. The disparity is not one of buildings, since both states are at or near complete provision in permanent buildings, electricity, drinking water and basic sanitation. Mizoram's deficiencies lie in provision that recurs, namely materials, specialist staffing and dedicated programme space, and in the financing that would sustain them.

Governance, together with human resource depth, is a dimension on which neither state is ready, and it is the more fundamental of the two. In all 11 institutions the authority to appoint rests with a managing society or executive committee, never with a state department, and nowhere does selection extend beyond an interview. Since such a transition will be judged by the competence of the staff who carry it out, the deficiency is structural: the departments answerable for inclusive education possess no instrument for shaping who teaches in the institutions being converted. Therapeutic specialisation is correspondingly thin, such posts being funded by the managing body rather than sanctioned by the state.

Objective 3: To identify the institutional factors associated with the differential rate of conversion between the two states.

Four explanations are consistent with the evidence, and they are not independent of one another.

Financing: In Meghalaya the Social Welfare Department and Samagra Shiksha underwrite all 3 institutions, none of which charges families. In Mizoram the base is philanthropic: 5 of 8 schools rely on donations, 3 levy fees, 3 receive NGO support, and departmental assistance had reached 1 institution. Conversion is at once a capital and an organisational undertaking, requiring a planning horizon, a period in which established and new provision run concurrently, and confidence of a budget the following year. Donation-based financing furnishes none of these.

Institutional maturity and scale: Meghalaya's institutions have been active 30 to 39 years and employ a mean of 27 teachers each; Mizoram's range from 6 to 35 years and employ a mean of 7.3. A substantial establishment can second personnel to a new function while continuing to teach; an institution staffed by 1 teacher for 36 children cannot. Ainscow et al. (2013) linked successful change to carefully planned and sustained support, both presupposing an organisation large enough to plan.

Government responsiveness: Meghalaya's institutions are administered by executive committees within a government-financed framework, which affords the state both a channel of communication and a lever. Mizoram's are administered predominantly by independent registered societies drawing little financial support from the state and under no obligation to observe its timetable. A mandate reaches a society-managed institution as advice; it reaches a government-financed committee as an instruction.

Programme breadth: The typical Meghalaya institution works with approximately 8 of the Act's 21 categories against approximately 3 in Mizoram. Breadth of intake constitutes, in effect, partial inclusion already accomplished.

These factors reinforce one another: government financing permits scale, scale permits planning capacity, financial dependence confers governance leverage, and breadth of intake shortens the distance to be covered. Mizoram is weak on all four. What the evidence does not establish should be stated explicitly: two states were observed rather than a sample, so the association between financing model and rate of conversion, though consistent and plausible, cannot be treated as demonstrated causation.

Moreover, these characteristics were observed in the institutions that remain rather than in those that ceased to function as special schools, whose characteristics could not be recorded.

Objective 4: To propose a phased transition framework and practicable recommendations for North-Eastern contexts.

A uniform national timetable is unworkable; holding both states to one schedule would either delay Meghalaya or compel conversion in Mizoram before the receiving institutions can absorb the children. The recommendations are therefore arranged as a four-phase framework that sequences capacity ahead of conversion and treats special schools as assets to be repurposed rather than closed, the position for which Ainscow et al. (2013) argue.

Phase 1: Stabilise financing: Place every remaining special school upon a recurrent government grant sufficient to end fee-levying and donation dependence and to fund replacement and maintenance of assistive equipment. Nothing in the later phases is achievable by an institution unable to predict next year's budget.

Phase 2: Equip and staff: Complete barrier-free access and gender-segregated sanitation, provide dedicated programme space, widen the range of disability categories each institution can serve, and recruit therapeutic specialists. Extend recruitment beyond the interview, and render advanced qualification attainable for teachers already in post.

Phase 3: Reconstitute as resource centres: Establish the special school as a resource institution retaining its specialist staff and equipment and extending them to neighbouring mainstream schools through consultation, co-teaching, assessment support and materials adaptation. This is the role Ajdinski (2007) describes, and it preserves the expertise Ainscow et al. (2013) warn is otherwise forfeited.

Phase 4: Integrate and extend: Place children in neighbourhood schools supported by the resource centre, and extend provision beyond the urban footprint, which a conversion inheriting it would otherwise reproduce as continued rural exclusion.

Governance alignment must run through all four phases. Because the authority to appoint lies outside government in every institution, the departments concerned must work through the managing societies and committees rather than around them, conditioning grants upon recruitment and qualification standards.

Major Findings

1. Meghalaya's recognised special-school system contracted from 9 institutions to 4 by the time of data collection: 5 of the 9 (55.6%) had ceased to function as special schools. One of the 4 remaining schools did not grant permission for data collection, so 3 were studied.
2. All 8 of Mizoram's recognised special schools retained special-school status throughout, a conversion rate of 0.0%. Across both states, 5 of 17 institutions, or 29.4%, had converted at data collection.
3. The 3 Meghalaya institutions examined are the residue of a system already substantially transformed; they are not themselves schools that converted.
4. Meghalaya's remaining institutions rated high on physical accessibility, programme capacity, financial stability and conversion achieved (at state-system level), and partial on human resource depth and governance alignment. Mizoram's rated partial on physical accessibility, low on the next four dimensions, and none on conversion achieved.
5. Governance alignment, together with human resource depth, was a dimension on which neither state was ready. In all 11 institutions the authority to appoint rested with a managing society or executive committee and never with a state department, and recruitment nowhere extended beyond an interview. Therapeutic staffing was negligible in both states.
6. Physical infrastructure was not the binding constraint in either state, both being at or near complete provision in permanent buildings, electricity, drinking water and basic sanitation. Every one of the 11 institutions was urban, and neither state operated a special school in a rural area.
7. All 3 Meghalaya institutions were underwritten by the Social Welfare Department and Samagra Shiksha and levied no fees, whereas in Mizoram 5 of 8 relied upon donations, 3 levied fees, 3 received NGO support, and departmental assistance had reached a single institution.
8. Meghalaya's institutions had been active 30 to 39 years with a mean of 27 teachers each, against 6 to 35 years and a mean of 7.3 in Mizoram, and served approximately 8 of the 21 scheduled disability categories against approximately 3. No Mizoram institution served children with

specific learning disabilities, whereas all 3 Meghalaya institutions did. These factors appeared mutually reinforcing, and Mizoram was weak on all of them.

Discussion

Two states of comparable terrain, history, literacy and policy exposure have converted their special-school systems at rates of 55.6% and zero. Since both received the same national mandate, the unevenness is unlikely to stem from the policy itself.

The obvious reading, that Meghalaya is advanced and Mizoram lagging, conceals two matters. Conversion is not of itself an educational good: a special school closing without a resource centre to succeed it has removed provision rather than rendered it inclusive, and this study cannot establish what the children in converted institutions received afterwards. That is the distinction Ainscow and Miles (2008) draw between systemic transformation and the mere relocation of children. Moreover, Meghalaya's 3 surviving institutions are the best-resourced in the study, and those which converted may have been the weaker ones, which should temper any inference that the model is transferable.

Where financing is concerned, the operative mechanism appears to be time horizon rather than quantum. Conversion obliges an institution to maintain two forms of provision concurrently, release staff for retraining, and commit to a plan whose costs precede its benefits. Donation-financed institutions cannot undertake commitments of that shape, not because donors give too little but because donations cannot be forecast, and where the state does not pay the shortfall passes to families of children with disabilities. Yet financing does not purchase everything: Meghalaya's institutions rest upon a government base and still exhibit no government appointment of teachers, no written selection test and few therapeutic specialists. An inclusive system inherits its workforce from the special schools preceding it, and a transition leaving recruitment untouched will reproduce within inclusive schools the staffing pattern the special schools already had.

Conversion also inherits geography. All 11 institutions stand in district towns, while 79.93% of Meghalaya's population and 47.89% of Mizoram's is rural. Where a special school becomes a resource centre in the town it already occupies, the rural child who could not reach the one will not reach the other. Sarkar and Kundu (2016) documented deficits in provision across the North-East; the present enumeration shows not a shortage of rural special schools but their complete absence, so rural extension must be a designed phase rather than an anticipated by-product.

Devi (2023) observed that provisions permitting enrolment have not produced functional inclusion. These findings suggest why. Where financing is stable, establishments substantial and governance aligned, a mandate becomes a programme; where financing is donated and governance independent, it becomes an aspiration recorded in a file.

Limitations

The study enumerates two states rather than sampling many, so its conversion figures are exact for Mizoram and Meghalaya but support no inference about any other state. Meghalaya's conversion figure rests upon 9 institutions, so a single school shifts it by 11.1 percentage points, and its readiness profile rests upon only 3, because 1 of its 4 remaining special schools did not grant permission for data collection. The converted institutions were not followed, so the study cannot report what provision the children enrolled in them now receive. Finally, the association between financing model and conversion rate rests upon two systems and is offered as the most plausible reading rather than as demonstrated causation.

Conclusion

The two systems moved in opposite directions. Of Meghalaya's 9 recognised special schools, 5 had ceased to operate as such by the time of data collection, whereas none of Mizoram's 8 did so. Readiness follows the same division: Meghalaya's remaining institutions rate high on physical accessibility, programme capacity, financial stability and conversion achieved (at state-system level), while Mizoram's rate low on financing, programme capacity, human resource depth and governance. On governance neither state is ready, since in neither does a government department appoint the teachers of a special school or employ a written selection test.

Because both states received an identical mandate at the same moment, the divergence is unlikely to reflect policy exposure. It is associated with financing, institutional scale, governance responsiveness and breadth of intake, four mutually reinforcing factors on all of which Mizoram is weak. A uniform national timetable is therefore unworkable, and a phased framework that stabilises financing, closes the readiness deficiencies, reconstitutes special schools as resource centres and only thereafter integrates is better matched to the evidence. The transition must also extend beyond the urban footprint, since converting an urban institution generates no rural coverage. As inclusion becomes the organising

principle of school education, whatever succeeds the special school will inherit its buildings, its staff and its geography, and unless deliberately designed otherwise, its exclusions.

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Moral Values of Middle School Students in Aizawl: A Comparative Analysis Across Gender and School Management

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Abstract

Middle school marks a critical phase in a student's life, during which they begin to shape their values, beliefs, and behavior. During this developmental stage, students are highly impressionable and are influenced by peers, environment, and societal norms. This study examines the moral values of middle school students in Aizawl City, focusing on differences based on gender and type of school management. The findings reveal that a majority of students possess high moral values. Female students exhibited higher moral values than male students. This difference may be associated with gender-role socialization and family influences, although these factors were not directly examined in the present study. Similarly, students from private schools showed significantly higher moral values than those from government schools, possibly due to better moral education programs, more supportive family backgrounds, and greater school resources. Previous research has suggested that socioeconomic status and parental factors may influence moral development; however, these factors were not examined in the present study. These findings underscore the importance of targeted efforts by teachers, parents, and policymakers to reinforce moral education, especially among boys and government school students. Strengthening moral values during middle school is essential for promoting responsible, empathetic, and ethical individuals who can contribute positively to society.

Key words: Moral values, Middle school students, gender difference, school management

Introduction

Moral values are key principles that guide people toward appropriate action and away from wrongfulness. From the Latin term *moralis*, which also speaks of proper behaviour, character, and conduct (Gert & Gert, 2020), morality guides people to differentiate between right and wrong, which in turn helps in their actions and decisions (Haidt, 2012). Such values, which are formed by customs, religion, education, and belief (Turiel, 2002), are most critical in personality formation and moral decision-making.

Despite their significance, current education does not sufficiently incorporate moral instruction. While there are researchers accepting that moral values are innate, most research believes that moral development transpires most importantly through socialization and learning by experience (Kohlberg, 1981; Nucci & Turiel, 2009). Ethics, being a continuation of morality, involves purposeful application

of such values, most importantly in situations of dilemmas (Beauchamp & Childress, 2019). Upholding moral integrity elevates respect for other human beings and social cohesion (Rawls, 1971).

NEP 2020 emphasizes including moral values and ethics in the education process to develop students holistically. It promotes value education that inculcates empathy, respect, responsibility, and integrity in young minds. By including character development with academic education, NEP 2020 aims to develop responsible and morally inclined citizens who will strive for improvement in society (Ministry of Education, 2020).

Middle school is a critical phase in moral development, where students establish attitudes that will shape their academic and social behavior. According to research, students who have high moral values have better academic performances, exhibiting hard work, persistence, and responsibility (Lickona, 1991). It has also been realized that moral education enhances empathy, tolerance, and respect for diversity, reducing undesirable conduct like dishonesty and aggression (Berkowitz & Bier, 2004). Given the importance of moral values in children's life, this study explores middle school students' moral values in Aizawl City, noting gender and school administration-driven changes. This will help teachers, administrators, and decision-makers to learn about ways to improve students' moral development.

Objectives of the Study

1. To find out the moral values of middle school students in Aizawl City.
2. To compare the moral values of middle school students in Aizawl with reference to gender.
3. To compare the moral values of middle school students in Aizawl with reference to the type of management.

Hypotheses of the study

1. There is no significant difference between the Moral Values of Middle School Students in Aizawl City with reference to their Gender.
2. There is no significant difference between the Moral Values of Middle School Students in Aizawl City with reference to School Management.

Method of the study:

Descriptive survey research was used in the study to assess moral values among middle school students. Dr. Alpana Sen Gupta and Prof. Arun Kumar Singh's Moral Values Scale (MVS, Sen Gupta & Singh, 1985) was used as a scale to measure moral values.

The population of this study includes all middle school students in Aizawl City. A total of 200 middle school students, comprising 100 males and 100 females, were selected from two government and two private schools in Aizawl City using stratified random sampling. Percentage analysis, Mean, Standard Deviation, and t'-test were also employed when comparison of moral values were carried out based on gender and school management.

Findings and Discussion of the study

Table 1
Moral Values of Middle School Students in Aizawl City

Description	Response	Percentage
Very High Moral Values	28	14%
High Moral values	97	48%
Medium Moral Values	70	35%
Low Moral Values	5	3%
Very Low Moral values	0	0%

From the above table, it can be found that 14% of Middle School Students in Aizawl City have very high moral values. The table also shows that the largest proportion (48%) of middle school students had high moral values, followed by 35% with medium moral values. The table also shows that 3% of the Middle School Students in Aizawl City have low moral values. Overall, 62% of students were classified as having high or very high moral values. The results indicate that a large proportion of middle school students have high moral values.

Discussion

The findings shows that 62% of students in middle schools in Aizawl City have high to very high moral values, and only 3% fall in the low category. The dominance of high moral values among students in Aizawl could be because of proper family rearing, strong school culture, and social enforcement of moral values, which have also been emphasized in Kanzal, V. R., Subikshalakshmi, G., & Goswami, L, 2016

It has also been found that students who fall in the middle socioeconomic status have high moral values (Naseri, 2018; Chinchkhede, 2021). The absence of very low moral values (0%) is a positive indicator that family, school, and social influences in Aizawl are reinforcing good ethics. It strengthens NEP 2020's emphasis on value education, which encourages incorporating moral reasoning and ethics in class (NEP, 2020, Section 4.27).

Table 2
Comparison of Moral Values of Middle School Students in Aizawl City with reference to Gender

Gender	N	Mean	SD	t-value	Level of Significance
Male	100	25.01	3.72	2.10	0.05
Female	100	26.07	3.36		

From the above table, it can be seen that the t-value relating to the comparison of Moral Values of Middle School Students in Aizawl City with reference to their Gender is significant at 0.05 level. Therefore, the null hypothesis, "There is no significant difference between the Moral Values of

Middle School Students in Aizawl City with reference to their Gender” is rejected. It implies that there is a significant difference between Moral Values of Male and Female School Students in Aizawl City. However, the mean score of female school students is higher than the male students, therefore it can be concluded that female students have higher moral values than the male students.

Discussions:

Naseri (2018) and Parua (2018) also concluded that girls had more moral values than boys, verifying that gender also had a notable contribution to moral development. Kaur (2016) and Rana and Kumari (2019) similarly reported higher moral-value scores among female students than male students. These findings are consistent with the present study, in which female students obtained a higher mean score than male students. It, however, contrasts with some like Bisht and Sharma (2012) and Bhalla (2019), who concluded that there were no significant gender divergences, but their findings were, nevertheless, subtly oriented towards girls showing high moral values. Muthaiyan (2022) even found that male students had more moral values than girls in some situations, showing regional and cultural variability. It could be due to contextual issues such as family structure, socio-cultural standards, or rural or urban location, which often influence value development. Alazab (2013) concluded that moral values were more aligned to social conduct in girls than boys, verifying that girls perhaps absorb moral standards more effectively.

Factors for the disparity in moral values between male and female school students:

Socialization Practices: Gilligan’s (1982) theory of care-based morality suggests that girls are often socialized to prioritize empathy, responsibility, and interpersonal harmony, which align with traditional moral assessments.

Parenting and Family Influence: Parents may put more emphasis on moral behavior for girls than for boys, intentionally or unintentionally, due to cultural beliefs (Parua, 2018). Parental involvement and family type are also associated factors; there are findings that girls who are middle class or have stable family structures are more likely to possess high moral standards (Chinchkhede, 2021; Naseri, 2018).

School and Teacher Influence: Teachers usually seek girls to act more responsibly in school; they are more encouraging and patient towards them. Such positive interest makes girls feel valuable when they are honest, cooperative, or helpful toward other people—more prone to absorb those values and lead their lives based on them. Teachers usually seek more responsible behavior and moral conduct in girls, which strengthens their value orientation (Kanzal, V. R., 2016)

Measurement Bias: Moral value scales may emphasize traits (e.g., honesty, kindness) that align with stereotypically feminine virtues, leading to higher female scores (Chinchkhede, 2021).

Table 3
Comparison of Moral Values of Middle School Students in Aizawl City with reference to School Management

Type of school	N	Mean	SD	t-value	Level of Significance
Govt. school	100	23.93	4.00	6.42	0.01
Private school	100	27.14	3.03		

From the table, it can be seen that the t-value relating to the comparison of Moral Values of Middle School Students in Aizawl city with reference to school Management is significant at 0.01 level. Therefore, the null hypothesis, “There is no significant difference between the Moral Values of Middle School Students in Aizawl City with reference to School Management” is rejected. It implies that there is a significant difference between Moral Values of Government and Private Middle School Students in Aizawl City. However, the mean score of private school students is higher than government school students, so it can be concluded that private school students have higher moral values than government school students.

Discussion of results:

The findings of the present study are consistent with some previous research but differ from others. Taneja (2017) reported significantly higher moral-value scores among government-school students than private-school students. In contrast, Parua (2018), in a study of senior secondary school students in Odisha, reported comparatively higher moral values among private-school students. Thankachan and Raizada (2020) also reported comparatively higher levels of moral values among students from missionary schools. Javed (2018) reported higher levels of forgiveness and morality among private-school students in Pakistan. Conversely, Rafique et al. (2020) found relatively better moral development among students in public-sector colleges than among their private-sector counterparts. Lalmuanpuii (2021), in Mizoram, reported no significant difference in moral development according to school type. These mixed findings indicate that differences in students' moral values across school-management types may vary according to educational, social, cultural, and institutional contexts.

Factors for the disparity in moral values between government and private middle school student

Pedagogical Differences: Participatory approaches to moral education may provide opportunities for children to actively engage with and apply moral values, as discussed by Johansson et al. (2011). Al-Ghaduri (2020) found that interactive curricula in Kuwaiti kindergartens had more moral value internalization. Government schools may have passive moral instruction, which is in line with Kanzal et al. (2016) who found a theoretical-practical application gap in Indian schools.

Parental Involvement and Home Support: Students at private schools are likely to have more involved families that are also supportive of moral education at home. Socioeconomic background plays a role, with middle-class families emphasizing value education (Naseri, 2018; Chinchkhede, 2021).

Commitment of Teacher and School Environment: Private school teachers tend to be more committed and effective in inculcating moral values due to better school monitoring, and accountability (Kanzal et al., 2016). Private schools may be more dedicated to their work. Thankachan and Raizada (2020) found that students from missionary schools demonstrated comparatively higher levels of self-concept and moral values, and that self-concept and moral values were positively associated with academic achievement.

Conclusion

This study finds significant differences in moral values between government and private middle school students in Aizawl City, with government-school students showing significantly lower moral-value scores than private-school students. Although most students have moderate to high moral values, the observed difference may be associated with differences in school environment, pedagogical practices, family support, and other contextual factors; however, these factors were not

directly examined in the present study. The finding that female students obtained significantly higher moral-value scores than male students highlight the potential value of gender-sensitive approaches to moral education. Since NEP 2020 aims to develop responsible and morally inclined citizens who will strive for improvement in society, policymakers may consider strengthening teacher training in interactive moral pedagogy, integrating ethical learning across the curriculum, and promoting community-school collaboration. Government schools, in particular, would benefit from increased funding for co-curricular activities and experiential learning programs. Future research should explore longitudinal trends and culturally tailored interventions to ensure moral education resonates with Mizoram's unique social context. With such reforms, teachers and policymakers can prepare not only academically competent but also values-sensitive students, better equipped to bring about a more thoughtful and caring society. Finally, moral education should move beyond theoretical learning to practical action, preparing students to apply such values to practice in everyday living.

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Perceptions of Postgraduate Students regarding Assessment Practices at Mizoram University

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Abstract

The study explores postgraduate students' perception on assessment practices at Mizoram University, evaluating their perceptions regarding fairness, effectiveness, feedback quality, transparency and alignment with course objectives. Using a descriptive survey design, data were collected among 100 final semester postgraduate students selected through stratified random sampling across ten academic schools. Descriptive statistical analysis using simple percentages revealed that traditional assessment methods – primarily written examinations and assignments continue to dominate departmental evaluations. While a majority of respondents perceived current assessment practices as fair and aligned with learning objectives, innovative, skill-oriented and reflective tools such as portfolios, case studies and peer/self-assessments remain underutilized. A high demand was reported for continuous, formative feedback and practical, application-driven evaluation methods. Furthermore, findings highlight gaps in the effective integration of ICT-based assessments and inconsistent transparency in communicating grading criteria and internal marks. The study recommends diversifying evaluation methods, standardizing rubric transparency, enhancing digital assessment infrastructure and institutionalizing continuous, dialogic feedback loops in alignment with the competency-based frameworks envisioned by the National Education Policy (NEP) 2020.

Keywords: Perception, postgraduate students, assessment practices, higher education.

Introduction

Education is associated with the development of a national economy, through the production of quality human capital that is resulting from a well-planned education. One of the important aspects in education that needs a careful planning is the process of assessment, since the assessment process will determine the quality of outcome. Generally, assessment plays an important role in any tasks that someone has to complete. It refers to the process of obtaining dimensions in a particular area or things according to predetermined objectives. Assessment is broadly defined in education context, which involves the process of getting to know students' development in a holistic manner. These processes require teachers to collect, translate, record and make use of information about students' response to the task of education (Lambert and Lines, 2000). Specifically, assessment in classroom context refers to

activities that involve the processes of designing, building, managing, examining and reporting by teachers in schools, which involve pupils, parents and external organizations.

The National Education Policy 2020 introduces a profound transformation in the way assessment is conducted in school education. National Curriculum Frameworks at different point of times, tried to translate significant recommendations of Committees, Commissions and policy documents into implementation strategies in the areas of teaching, learning and assessment for qualitative improvement in entire school education system. The New Education Policy (NEP) was introduced in India in 2020, since then much is talked about its implementation and assessment. It aims to address the essential developmental needs of our country. This policy aims to revise and revamp aspects of education structure that includes regulation and governance of the education system, create a new system that will align the goals of the 21st century education, that will be built upon India's value systems and traditions. It operates on the principle that education should develop not only cognitive abilities both the foundational skills of literacy and numeracy and the advanced higher order skills of critical thinking and problem-solving but also develop social, ethical, and emotional capacities and dispositions (NEP, 2020). This policy envisions an educational system that is rooted in Indian ethos and contributes directly to transforming India into a vibrant and equitable knowledge society. Providing high quality education to everyone will help in making India a global knowledge superpower. Whereas implementation is much related to policy matter, assessment is more dynamic and open for all the stakeholders.

Postgraduate level of assessments is designed to cultivate independent, expert thinkers. They move beyond basic knowledge testing to evaluate advanced skills like critical analysis and research. It represents a complex and multifaceted approach to evaluating advanced learning, designed to cultivate independent scholars and practitioners capable of contributing significantly to their respective fields. Unlike undergraduate assessments, which often focus on foundational knowledge acquisition, postgraduate evaluations prioritize higher-order cognitive skills, including critical analysis, synthesis, evaluation and the generation of new knowledge. The cornerstone of postgraduate assessment often lies in original research methodologies, sophisticated data analysis and the ability to articulate complex ideas in a scholarly manner. The diverse nature of postgraduate programs necessitates a tailored approach to assessment.

In disciplines within the humanities and social sciences. Extended essays, seminar discussions and critical reviews of existing scholarship are common forms of evaluation. The integration of technology has also transformed postgraduate assessment practices. Online platforms facilitate peer review, collaborative project work and the creation of digital portfolios, enabling students to showcase their work to a wider audience. Faculty members serve as mentors, providing ongoing feedback and guidance to help students refine their research and analytical skills. This formative assessment, combined with summative evaluations creates a holistic approach that fosters intellectual growth and prepares students for successful careers in academia, industry or professional practice. The emphasis on independent learning, critical thinking and research skills ensures that postgraduates are equipped to tackle complex challenges and contribute meaningfully to the advancement of knowledge in their chosen fields.

Review of Related Literature

Sadler (2010) concluded that the effectiveness of assessment feedback depends not merely on the quality or detail of feedback but on creating learning environments that actively engage students in the learning process. He proposed purposeful peer assessment as an alternative to the conventional task–response–appraisal–feedback sequence, emphasizing its role as a pedagogical strategy. Similarly, Mtshali, Sithole, and Harerimana (2016) examined feedback practices among postgraduate nursing students and identified written, verbal, electronic, and peer feedback as commonly used approaches. Written feedback was the most frequently used, while peer feedback was perceived as the least useful and effective, suggesting the need for appropriate preparation and training for effective peer feedback.

Yigzaw (2013) and Ayalew (2016) examined teachers' and students' perceptions and practices of assessment in educational settings. Yigzaw (2013) found that continuous assessment was mainly used to evaluate students' intellectual achievement and that teachers did not adequately implement continuous assessment, highlighting the need for professional training. Likewise, Ayalew (2016) found that both teachers and students at Bahir Dar University had unfavorable perceptions of assessment practices, which were considered largely theoretical and lacking sufficient practical orientation. However, there was no significant difference between teachers' and students' perceptions.

Statement of the Problem

Assessment plays a crucial role in determining students' learning and achievement in higher education. With the shift towards competency-based and student-centered education, assessment is increasingly expected to go beyond traditional examinations and include continuous, formative, authentic, and varied assessment practices that promote higher-order thinking and meaningful learning. NEP 2020 also emphasizes a holistic and competency-based approach to assessment. However, the effectiveness of assessment practices largely depends on how students experience and perceive them in terms of fairness, transparency, relevance, feedback, and alignment with learning outcomes. In the context of Mizoram University, there is a need to understand how postgraduate students perceive the assessment practices followed in their programmes, particularly with regard to the methods used, fairness of evaluation, feedback provided, transparency, and their contribution to learning. Although assessment is an integral part of postgraduate education, limited empirical evidence is available on students' perceptions of these practices at Mizoram University. Therefore, the present study seeks to examine the perceptions of postgraduate students regarding assessment practices at Mizoram University and to identify areas that may require improvement for making assessment more meaningful, transparent, and supportive of student learning.

Research Questions

1. What types of assessment practices are employed at the postgraduate level across various departments of Mizoram University?
2. What are the perceptions of postgraduate students regarding the assessment methods used in their academic programmes?

3. What is the nature of feedback provided by teachers on internal assessments at the postgraduate level?
4. What challenges do postgraduate students face in relation to internal assessment practices?

Objectives of the Study:

1. To identify the types of assessment practices employed at the postgraduate level across various departments in Mizoram University.
2. To examine postgraduate students' perception of the current assessment methods used in their academic programs.
3. To analyse the nature of feedback provided by teachers on internal assessments.
4. To explore the challenges faced by postgraduate students in relation to internal assessment practices.
5. To propose suggestions for improving the assessment system based on student feedback.

Method of the study

Design

The present study employed a descriptive survey research design to examine the perceptions of postgraduate students regarding assessment practices at Mizoram University. The design was considered appropriate as the study sought to describe students' perceptions, experiences, feedback practices, and challenges related to assessment.

Sample

The sample for the study was selected using the stratified random sampling technique. One department was randomly selected from each of the ten schools of Mizoram University. From each selected department, 10 postgraduate students were selected as respondents, resulting in a total sample of 100 postgraduate students.

Tools used in the Study

In the present study, the researcher developed a questionnaire titled "Perception of Postgraduate Students Regarding Assessment Practices at Mizoram University." The questionnaire was designed to collect information on postgraduate students' perceptions, experiences, and challenges related to assessment practices at Mizoram University.

Data Analysis

The collected data were systematically organized, tabulated, and analyzed using frequency and percentage analysis. The findings were presented in tables to facilitate clear interpretation of postgraduate students' perceptions regarding assessment practices.

Major Findings of the Study:

1. Types of Assessment Practices Used in Departments

The study revealed that written tests and assignments are the most commonly used methods of internal assessment at the postgraduate level. Nearly all students reported the use of written tests, while assignments and presentations/seminars were also widely practiced.

However, innovative and learner-centered assessment methods such as peer/self-assessment, portfolios, reflective journals, book reviews, and case-study-based assessments were rarely used. This indicates that most departments still rely heavily on conventional forms of assessment rather than diversified and competency-based approaches.

2. Students' Perception of Fairness and Effectiveness of Assessment

The majority of postgraduate students perceived the assessment methods used in their departments as fair and unbiased. Most students also agreed that the assessment methods reflected the learning objectives of their courses.

At the same time, a considerable percentage of students remained neutral regarding fairness and effectiveness, suggesting uncertainty or inconsistency in assessment practices across departments. A small number of students expressed dissatisfaction, indicating that some improvements are needed in ensuring transparency and consistency in evaluation.

3. Assessment Focus on Understanding and Application

More than half of the respondents believed that the assessment practices in their departments focused on understanding and application rather than rote memorization. This reflects a gradual shift toward outcome-based and conceptual learning.

Nevertheless, a significant proportion of students remained neutral, indicating that memorization-based assessment practices still continue in some departments. Therefore, there remains a need to strengthen analytical, critical-thinking, and application-oriented assessment practices.

4. Clarity of Assessment Purpose and Grading Criteria

The findings showed that many students were uncertain whether the purpose of each assessment was clearly explained beforehand. Responses indicated inadequate communication regarding assessment expectations, criteria, and grading procedures.

Students strongly emphasized the need for clear sharing of grading criteria and assessment standards. This finding highlights the importance of transparency in assessment practices to reduce confusion and anxiety among students.

5. Use of ICT-Based Assessment

The study revealed that ICT-based assessment practices are not fully integrated or effectively implemented in many departments. A large percentage of respondents remained neutral regarding the

effectiveness of ICT-based assessments, while only a limited number strongly agreed about its effective use.

This suggests that digital assessment methods, online evaluation tools, and technology-supported feedback systems are still underdeveloped at the postgraduate level.

6. Nature and Quality of Feedback

The findings indicated that feedback provided by teachers plays an important role in students' learning. Most students reported that feedback helps them identify mistakes, improve future performance, and motivates them to study better.

However, only a small percentage of students stated that they “always” receive effective feedback, which indicates inconsistency in feedback practices among departments and teachers.

The study also found that oral feedback is more commonly used than written feedback. Students appreciated opportunities to discuss their performance with teachers, particularly in presentations and assignments, reflecting a supportive teacher-student relationship.

7. Transparency in Internal Assessment

The findings showed inconsistency in displaying internal assessment marks before submission to the Controller of Examinations. While some departments regularly display marks, many students reported that this occurs only “sometimes.” This indicates that transparency in internal assessment procedures is not uniformly maintained across departments.

8. Teachers' Evaluation Practices

Most students perceived teachers' evaluation methods as “average” in terms of strictness and leniency. However, internal tests were viewed as comparatively stricter than assignments and seminars. The majority of teachers completed evaluation within one week, suggesting a reasonably efficient assessment process.

9. Students' Demand for Practical and Skill-Based Assessment

One of the most significant findings of the study is that a majority of students strongly preferred more practical, skill-based, and application-oriented assessment methods.

Students expressed the need for assessments that promote real-life application, creativity, problem-solving abilities, and active participation rather than relying only on theoretical written examinations.

10. Need for Continuous Feedback

A large majority of respondents believed that students should receive more continuous feedback throughout the semester. This finding supports the importance of formative assessment practices in improving learning outcomes and student engagement.

Discussion of results

The present study examined postgraduate students' opinions on assessment practices at Mizoram University and revealed important insights into the effectiveness, fairness, transparency, and quality of evaluation methods. The findings show that traditional assessment methods such as written examinations and assignments continue to dominate across departments, while alternative approaches like peer assessment, portfolios, reflective journals, and case-study evaluations are rarely used. Although presentations and seminars are gradually being introduced, the continued dependence on examination-oriented systems suggests that the university has not yet fully adopted the learner-centered and competency-based assessment practices promoted by the National Education Policy 2020. This reliance on conventional testing may limit students' opportunities to develop higher-order skills such as critical thinking, creativity, collaboration, and problem-solving.

The study further found that most postgraduate students considered departmental assessment practices to be fair, unbiased, and generally aligned with course objectives. Many respondents also observed a growing emphasis on conceptual understanding and practical application rather than rote memorization, reflecting a gradual shift toward outcome-based education. These findings highlight the need for greater transparency, standardized rubrics, and more consistent communication of assessment expectations across departments.

In addition, the integration of ICT-based assessment practices was found to be uneven, with many students reporting limited effectiveness of digital evaluation tools due to infrastructural and implementation challenges. Feedback was identified as a highly valued component of learning, as students emphasized the importance of timely, constructive, and interactive feedback for academic improvement. While oral feedback was more common, only a small proportion of students consistently received detailed written feedback. Overall, the findings reveal a strong student preference for practical, skill-oriented, and application-based assessment methods over purely theoretical examinations.

Recommendations

In light of the findings and subsequent analysis, the following recommendations are proposed to improve assessment practices at the postgraduate level in Mizoram University:

1. Academic departments should adopt a wider variety of assessment techniques such as project work, case studies, portfolios, reflective journals, peer assessment, group discussions, field-based assignments, and problem-solving activities. Diversified assessment methods would help evaluate not only students' theoretical knowledge but also their practical skills, creativity, communication abilities, critical thinking, and collaborative learning.
2. Since the majority of students expressed the need for more practical and application-oriented assessments, universities should integrate skill-based evaluation into postgraduate programs. Assessment

activities should focus on real-life application of knowledge, analytical thinking, research skills, problem-solving ability, and professional competence.

3. Academic departments should maintain transparency in internal assessment procedures by displaying marks and feedback regularly before final submission to the Controller of Examinations. Students should also be given opportunities to clarify doubts regarding marks and evaluation. Transparent practices help reduce misunderstandings and promote fairness and accountability within the assessment system.

4. Assessment practices should be carefully aligned with course objectives and learning outcomes. Teachers should ensure that assessment tasks measure not only memorization but also higher-order thinking skills such as analysis, synthesis, evaluation, creativity, and research competence.

5. The university should periodically review and evaluate existing assessment systems by collecting feedback from students, teachers, and academic experts. Such reviews would help identify strengths, weaknesses, and areas requiring improvement.

Conclusion

The study's result shows a growing need to change postgraduate assessment methods to a more competency-based, clear and student-centered model. Students pointed out the importance of evaluations that measure practical skills, analytical thinking and the application of knowledge in real-world situations rather than simple memorization. The research highlights the need to clearly communicate assessment standards and methods to ensure fairness and build trust among students. Additionally, the emphasis on ongoing formative evaluation and consistent feedback shows that assessment should help with learning and improvement. The limited use of ICT-driven assessment methods suggests a need for broader adoption of digital tools to increase effectiveness and engagement in the evaluation process. Encouraging student involvement through self and peer evaluation can promote reflective learning, accountability and independence. Overall, these results suggest that assessment methods in higher education must evolve to support comprehensive growth, encourage active participation and create meaningful learning experiences that align with modern educational goals and the NEP 2020 vision.

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A Study of Stress Levels among Women Teachers in Mizoram

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Abstract

Teaching is a challenging profession that can cause stress due to workload and job responsibilities. Women teachers may experience additional stress as they often have to balance their professional duties with family and social responsibilities. The main objective of the study is to assess the level of stress among women teachers. A descriptive comparative research design was adopted in which the study sample comprised of 83 women teachers of Mizoram. Data were collected using “Women Teachers’ Stress scale” which revealed that most women teachers experienced a moderate level of stress. Further, it is revealed that stress among women teachers were independent of profession and location. Stress is prevalent among women teachers, with the majority experiencing moderate levels of stress. The findings highlight the need for regular stress management programs, supportive work environments, and strategies to promote the psychological well-being of women teachers.

Keywords: Stress, Women Teachers, Profession, Location

Introduction

Today, teaching in colleges and universities is no longer a male-centric profession. Women now constitute a large proportion of teachers, particularly in arts, humanities, social sciences, education, and various professional courses. Teaching is considered a stressful profession due to the demands and responsibilities associated with the role, particularly for women teachers. Stress among women teachers is an increasing concern as they are often required to balance professional responsibilities with domestic roles and responsibilities such as childcare, elder care, and household management. Managing these multiple roles can lead to significant physical, emotional, and psychological problems.

Work-related stress among women teachers may arise from heavy workloads, long working hours, limited career advancement opportunities, workplace discrimination, family and social expectations and lack of adequate support. These factors can contribute to increased levels of stress and job dissatisfaction. Prolonged stress among women teachers can lead to physical and mental health problems, including burnout, anxiety, depression, and reduced work performance. The study of stress among women teachers is necessary because they often balance multiple responsibilities at work and home. Understanding the level and causes of stress can help develop appropriate coping strategies and support systems for women teachers.

Rationale of the study

Teaching is widely recognized as one of the most demanding professions, requiring educators to manage multiple responsibilities such as classroom instructions, student assessments, administrative duties, and professional development. Despite the vital role of women teachers in education, they often experience stress due to the demands of balancing professional and personal responsibilities. Limited information is available regarding the level of stress among women teachers and the factors associated with it. Therefore, this study was undertaken to assess the level of stress among women teachers, compare stress levels among selected groups, and determine its association with demographic variables. The findings may help in developing appropriate interventions to reduce stress and promote teachers' well-being and effectiveness.

Review of literature

Venkataraman and Kannan (2022) conducted a study on occupational stress among 200 women teachers in secondary schools of Nagapattinam District, Tamil Nadu, using a normative survey method and the Occupational Stress Scale developed by Chandra N. (2008). The study found that women teachers experienced a moderate level of occupational stress. The authors recommended democratic management practices, greater professional autonomy, psychological counseling, and yoga programs to reduce stress.

Rani and Indira C. (2023) conducted a study on occupational stress among 100 women teachers of secondary schools in Krishna district. The study revealed that the majority of secondary school women teachers experienced a moderate level of occupational stress.

Bharathi, Dawala, and Saujanya (2016) conducted a qualitative study among 100 women teachers in Andhra Pradesh to identify the causes of stress. Data were collected using a questionnaire developed by the investigators and analyzed using percentage and Chi-square tests. The study found that married women teachers experienced stress mainly due to family responsibilities, while physical stress was commonly associated with prolonged standing during teaching. The researchers concluded that stress among women teachers was related to occupational, family, and health-related factors.

A study by Addison and Yanekra (2015) investigated stress and burnout among female teachers in the Ghana Education Service. Using a descriptive cross-sectional design with purposive sampling (n = 25), the study found that female teachers experienced a high level of occupational stress, mainly due to work overload and interpersonal relationship issues. The study also reported that stress had a negative impact on teachers' job performance.

Statement of the problem

The present study is titled 'A Study of Stress Levels among Women Teachers in Mizoram'.

Objectives of the study

1. To find out the level of stress among women teachers in Mizoram.
2. To compare the level of stress between women teachers working in nursing and non- nursing colleges in Mizoram
3. To compare the level of stress between women teachers from rural and urban areas in Mizoram.
4. To find out the association between level of stress and selected demographic variables.

Research hypotheses

H₁: There is a significant difference in level of stress between women teachers working in nursing and non- nursing colleges in Mizoram.

H₂: There is a significant difference in the level of stress between women teachers from rural and urban areas in Mizoram.

H₃: There is a significant association between the level of stress and selected demographic variables.

Methodology: The research design adopted for the study was descriptive comparative research design using quantitative approach.

Population: The target population consists of all women teachers working in nursing and non-nursing colleges in Mizoram.

Table 1
Number of women teachers from nursing and non-nursing colleges of Mizoram (n=83)

Sl No	College	N
1	Nursing college	18
2	Non- nursing college	65

Sample: Women teachers working in different colleges (nursing and non- nursing colleges) of Mizoram including both urban and rural areas.

Sample size: The sample comprised of 83 women teachers, 18 teachers from nursing colleges and 65 women teachers from non-nursing colleges of Mizoram.

Sampling technique: Non- probability purposive sampling technique

Inclusion Criteria:

- Women teachers who are willing to participate
- Women teachers working in nursing and non-nursing colleges in Mizoram

Exclusion Criteria:

- Male teachers
- Teachers who are not willing to participate

Tool: Women Teachers' Stress scale developed by Careen EG Marbaniang and Dr. Yodida Bhutia was used to assess occupational stress among women teachers in this study. The reliability of the scale was established through reliability coefficient and internal consistency methods on a sample of 78 women teachers of secondary schools in Meghalaya. The reliability coefficients of the five dimensions with the

total stress scale ranged from 0.67 to 0.89 and were statistically significant at 0.01 level, indicating satisfactory internal consistency of the scale. The validity of the scale was established by correlating the total stress scores of each of the five dimensions. All correlations were significant at 0.01 level, indicating that the dimensional scores were positively related to the overall stress score and supporting the construct validity of the instrument.

The questionnaire consisted of two sections-

Section A- Demographic variables, and

Section B- Women Teacher's Stress Scale which consisted of 67 statements divided into five (5) dimensions namely, Work stress, social stress, Emotional stress, Physical stress and financial stress. The respondents were asked to rate all the items on 5-point scale i.e. "Always", "Sometimes", "Occasionally", "Rarely" and "Never".

Data collection procedure: The questionnaire Women Teacher's Stress Scale (WTSS-MCBY) was administered online via Google Forms. The teachers were assured about the confidentiality of their responses.

Data analysis and interpretation

Data was analyzed by statistical software (Microsoft offices excel) and using descriptive and inferential statistics like chi square test to find the association between level of stress among women teachers with selected demographic variables.

Results:

1. Findings related to Objective No.1: To find out the level of stress among women teachers in Mizoram

Table 2
Level of stress among women teachers in Mizoram (n=83)

Sl No	LEVEL OF STRESS	N	%
1	Extremely low	1	1.20
2	Low level	13	15.66
3	Below average	15	18.07
4	Moderate	35	42.17
5	Above average	12	14.46
6	Highly stress	6	7.23
7	Extremely stress	1	1.20

In order to find out the level of Stress among Women Teachers, the mean and S.D have been calculated.

Table 3
Mean and Standard Deviation of Stress scores among Women Teachers (n=83)

N	MEAN	SD
83	159.45	37.88

It is evident from the above table no.3 that the calculated mean score of entire sample indicates that Women Teachers have Moderate level of Stress.

2. Findings related to Objective 2: To compare the level of stress between women teachers working in nursing and non- nursing colleges in Mizoram:

Women teachers working in nursing colleges reported higher levels of stress than those working in non-nursing colleges. Research has also shown that nurse educators commonly experience stress related to workload, multiple responsibilities, and organizational factors.

Table 4
Comparison of stress scores between women teachers working in nursing and non-nursing colleges in Mizoram. (n=83)

Group	Frequency	Mean score	SD	T value
Nursing	18	164.17	41.39	0.49 df25.13 $p = 0.625$
Non- nursing	65	158.83	37.22	

The results revealed that there was **no statistically significant difference** in stress scores between nursing and non-nursing teachers ($t = 0.49$, $p = 0.625$).

3. Findings related to Objective 3: To compare the level of stress between rural and urban women teachers in Mizoram:

The geographical location of the workplace (rural or urban) may be an important factor influencing the stress levels of women teachers.

Table 5
Comparison of stress scores between rural and urban women teachers in Mizoram. (n=83)

Group	Frequency	Mean score	SD	T value
Rural	17	154.82	39.63	0.61 df24.02 $p = 0.549$
Urban	66	161.32	37.72	

The results revealed that there was no statistically significant difference in stress scores between rural and urban teachers ($t = 0.61$, $p = 0.549$).

4. Findings related to Objective 4: To find out the association between level of stress among women teachers with selected demographic variables.

Occupational stress among teachers may be influenced by various demographic characteristics, such as age, marital status, educational qualification, teaching experience, type of institution, and locality. Understanding the association between these variables and stress levels helps identify groups that may be more vulnerable to occupational stress and provides evidence for developing targeted interventions and support strategies.

Table 6
Association between levels of stress among women teachers with selected demographic variables.
(n=83)

DEMOGRAPHIC VARIABLES		FREQUENCY	Level of stress							Chi square (χ^2)	t value	p value
			Extremely low	Low	Below average	Moderate	Above average	Highly stress	Extremely stress			
Age	18- 35 yrs	20	0	4	4	7	2	2	1	4.09	9.49	df4 p>0.05 NS
	36- 50 yrs	53	0	4	9	28	6	6	0			
	>50 yrs	10	0	2	3	3	1	1	0			
Educational qualification	PhD	24	0	5	4	10	2	3	0	6.0	18	df18 p>0.05 NS
	M. Phil	3	0	1	0	2	0	0	0			
	Post-Graduate	52	1	6	11	21	9	3	1			
Years of teaching experience	Under Graduate	4	0	1	0	2	1	0	0	10.32	21.02	df12 p>0.05 NS
	0-10 years	34	0	5	6	15	4	3	1			
	11-20 yrs	38	0	6	7	17	5	3	0			
Type of employment	21yrs and above	11	1	2	2	3	3	0	0	0.35	5.991	df2 p>0.05 NS
	Regular	63	1	8	12	27	10	4	1			
	Contract	20	0	5	3	8	2	2	0			
Areas	Rural	17	1	3	2	7	2	2	0	0.21	5.991	df6 p>0.05 NS
	Urban	66	0	10	12	29	10	4	1			
Type of organization	Government	69	1	9	14	32	10	3	0	5.62	5.991	df2 p>0.05 NS
	Private	14	0	4	1	3	2	3	1			
Marital status	Married	53	1	6	11	25	8	2	0	9.551	21.026	df12 p>0.05 NS
	Single	23	0	6	3	7	3	3	1			
	Single parent	7	0	1	1	3	1	1	0			
Type of family	Nuclear	61	1	9	13	23	9	5	1	3.91	12.59	df6 p>0.05 NS
	Joint	22	0	4	2	12	3	1	0			

The Chi square test was used to assess whether there is a significant association between the levels of stress among women teachers and various demographic variables. The findings indicate that none of the demographic variables were statistically associated with the levels of stress. ($p > 0.05$ for all variables).

Discussion

The present study was conducted to assess the level of stress among women teachers, compare stress levels between nursing and non-nursing women teachers, compare stress levels between rural and urban women teachers, and determine the association between stress and selected demographic variables. The findings revealed that most women teachers experienced a moderate level of stress. This indicates that teaching continues to be a demanding profession for women, as they often balance professional responsibilities along with family and social obligations. This finding is supported by Saminathan Venkataraman (2022), which shows that women teachers have moderate level of Occupational Stress.

In comparing women teachers working in nursing and non- nursing colleges, there was no significant difference in level of stress between the two groups.

The comparison between rural and urban women teachers also demonstrated no differences in the stress levels.

The data from baseline variables reveals that there was no significant association between level of stress with selected demographic variables. The finding is supported by Seema Joseph & Dr. V. Rathnamani (2025), and Santi Devi (2012) who researched that certain demographic variables are not significantly associated with occupational stress.

The study concludes that stress is a significant issue among women teachers and requires attention from educational administrators and policymakers to promote healthier work environments and enhance the quality of teaching and professional satisfaction.

Nursing implications

- Nursing Practice: Identify stress and provide counseling, relaxation techniques and health education.
- Nursing Education: Integrate stress management training and awareness programs for women teachers.
- Nursing Administration: Organize workshops and support services to reduce stress among women teachers.
- Nursing Research: Conduct further studies on causes and management of occupational stress.

Recommendations

- Conduct stress management programs (yoga, relaxation, counseling) for women teachers.
- Conduct studies with larger samples and different settings.
- Provide regular mental health check-ups in educational institutions.
- Organize awareness programs on coping strategies and time management.

Conclusion

The present study assessed the level of stress among women teachers in Mizoram. The findings revealed that the majority of women teachers experienced a moderate level of stress. The study highlights that occupational stress is an important concern that may affect the health and work performance of teachers. Therefore, appropriate measures such as stress management programs and supportive work environments are essential to reduce stress and promote well-being among women teachers.

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