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PEDAGOGY, TEACHING AND LEARNING

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PEDAGOGIE CHRONICLES
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PEDAGOGIE CHRONICLES

EDITORIAL

Adhoc RC 1 Pedagogy, Teaching and Learning is happy to present the inaugural edition of Pedagogie Chronicles, its annual newsletter, being released on the occasion of the 50th All India Sociology Conference at SRM University-Amravati from December 28-30, 2025.

We firmly believe that there are different forms of expressing the social world around us, and hence in the Call for Submissions, we had sought short essays, artwork, poetry and reflections on innovative pedagogies from teachers, students, research scholars and early career researchers. It was to our great delight that we received submissions from a diverse set of people across Indian institutions and from various disciplinary backgrounds. Clearly poetry resonates with a lot of young people and themes on classroom, mathematics, curriculum, learning all find space through poems. In innovative pedagogic reflections, this issue is carrying an interesting feature on 'potluck pedagogy' enabling an interplay of memory, sharing and community building. There is a reflection by a research scholar on how democratic classrooms are sites of transformation. Looking at enthusiastic responses from students to the call for submissions, this issue has included a short research paper on Bihar's Liquor Ban and its long term social consequences on youth.

The effort through the Newsletter is three fold:

·Document the activities that Adhoc RC 1 is doing around the year
·Announce a call for submissions, encouraging young students, teachers in
  their   early careers to share/reflect on insights around teaching and learning
·Create a space for reflecting on sociology/social science teachers across
  the country, either through interviews or memoir writing

This is a humble beginning on our part and we hope to receive support from the broader sociology community towards our endeavor.

Wishing everyone a happy and sociologically imaginative 2026!
Editorial Team
Pedagogie Chronicles

KAMYAVARDHAN DAVE

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THE LEARNING WITHIN

The variables inside turned constant,
Equations blurred,
A dream began—
But vision never held its shape.
In crowded classes,
Benches pressed beneath the weight,
Noises dimmed,
And the inner voice began to rise.
Behold the joys—
A spark someone dares to share.
Behold the coy—
A gift everyone longs to give.
Was it mystery within,
The chemistry of life?
Or was it suspense alone
That carved my history?
October bore its revelations,
February sparked its revolution.
Yet the road remained untaken,
Winter pressed its silence.
The lessons slipped between the cracks,
Memory held what it could.
And still—
The learning space burns:
A place of struggle,
A place of becoming.

This poem captures the essence of learning as both a struggle and a spark —
where silence, suspense, and memory weave together the becoming of self.

HITESH

STUDENT, INDIAN INSTITUTE OF TECHNOLOGY PATNA

THE CURRENCY OF QUESTIONS

In morning light the classroom
breathes – chalk-dust
rising in the quiet, letters unfurl on
slate like tiny sails.
Today I guide young hands to shape
their own horizons
with chalk and wonder.

This is the old lesson: name the
earth, name the sky,
names given to stars we carry in our
eyes.
Yet even as sunlight gilds these
blackboard lines,
our voices reach beyond the glass:
pixel by pixel, we kindle
the same fire.

No matter how screens may flicker,
the wisdom survives:
teachers learn as they teach, each
question a mirror.

In shared silence or digital halls,
we mess with minds and hearts –
the living currency of learning.
Heirs to countless voices of old,
speaking truth in our own tongues.

In chalk and in code, the poem of
pedagogy lives:
lessons are songs passed hand to
hand,
as old as time and as new as
tomorrow.

HARSHIT SONI

STUDENT, DEPT OF MANAGEMENT STUDIES, JODHPUR INSTITUTE OF ENGINEERING AND TECHNOLOGY

THE JOY OF LEARNING

A book is a lantern, it brightens the way,
turning the night into radiant day.
Each question a treasure, each answer a key,
unlocking the doors of what I can be.
Mistakes are the roots where wisdom will grow,
The joy of learning is a constant glow.
The pages are pathways where wonders reside,
guiding the heart like a river's wide tide.
Each story a mirror, each lesson a song,
helping me see where I truly belong.
Through trials and triumphs, with courage I tread,
every new thought is a light being spread.
Knowledge is endless, it dances with time,
scaling the mountains, i steadily climb.
The sparks of discovery kindle my flame,
each moment of learning is never the same.
It builds up my spirit, it strengthens my voice,
in learning I find both my power and choice.
So let me keep seeking, with passion and cheer,
each answer discovered makes visions more clear.
For learning's a garden where dreams start to rise,
its beauty reflected in bright, eager eyes.
A lifelong companion wherever I go,
the joy of learning will forever grow.

ANANYA SHUKLA

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JAMIA MILLIA ISLAMIA UNIVERSITY, NEW DELHI

THE CLASSROOM OF BECOMING

A classroom,
Where the hums and drums of life,
Become more alive than ever.
Where chalks and markers
Paint onto the banality of existence,
Making it as vibrant as
The seven colours of the rainbow,
That streak across the town
with restless energy.
And education,
An instrument, as Paulo Freire reminds us,
Not merely for instruction,
But as a practice of freedom,
A way to read the world,
And to write ourselves into it.
More than a microcosm of
The larger world of endless possibilities,
It becomes a vehicle
Of Ambedkar's social emancipation,
A space where hierarchies are questioned,
Where knowledge can dismantle oppression
And imagination carves its own path.
Here, every silence can speak,
Every margin can hold a whisper of revolt,
Every scribbled note is a seed of thought.
Krishna Kumar would remind us:
The classroom is never neutral;
It socializes, it disciplines,
Yet also nurtures insurgent imagination.
Here, the mundane becomes miraculous,
Learning is dialogue, not domination,
And each lesson is a rehearsal
for freedom, justice, and solidarity.

A classroom-
A world in miniature.
A world waiting to be claimed,
Where every child, every voice
Can name the world
And name themselves.
All one needs to do is dream,
As Abdul Kalam reminds us,
"To dream before our dreams can come true."

ISHITA PUROHIT

STUDENT, DEPT OF COMPUTER SCIENCE AND ENGINEERING, JODHPUR INSTITUTE OF ENGINEERING AND TECHNOLOGY

MELODY OF WHISPERS

My heart sings
A song so sweet
Tales of my fantasy
With the destiny
Of my dreams
For what beckons to come
Holds no evidence
All I confide in is
the whispers of
the spirit's hymns.

VOID OF LIFE

Complain about the voids of life,
We often overlook its completeness.
Complain about the struggles of everyday,
We cast aside a whispered gift.
Alas, we awaken too late
To embrace life's ephemeral grace ,
To realize that the voids are
part of beautiful patterns of destiny,
The soft touch of fortune's hand.

These poems are inspired from the lessons I learnt during the classes.

NEHA KASERA

STUDENT, DEPT OF COMPUTER SCIENCE AND ENGINEERING, JODHPUR INSTITUTE OF ENGINEERING AND TECHNOLOGY

PLAYING WITH THE STONE

Playing with the stone —
a mundane act,
yet it stirs the curiosity
this God-gifted mind holds,
weaving the quiet crisscross
of heart and soul.

Even when it rolls a little far,
we want to kick it again,
a little more —
for the destination
has not yet been reached.

In this small play,
doesn't logic meet creativity?
And doesn't it hand us
a life lesson,
quiet as a prophet's voice?

This is poem is inspired from a painting that was hanging in one of my classroom celebrating the message it gave.

DR.P.V. RADHIKA

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"THE LIGHT THAT GUIDES"

An anxious pedagogue steps forth with zeal,
To awaken young minds with wisdom's appeal.
Within the classroom's sacred space,
Fresh youth blossom with a hopeful grace.
The room, a challenge where thoughts take flight,
Curriculum unfolds with empathy's light.
Presence steady, a teacher stands tall,
Guiding the learners through trials small and all.
The mentee's growth reflects the guide,
Discipline and plans stand side by side.
Assignments test, assessments reveal,
The intellects formed, the spirits they heal.
A reservoir of reflection deep,
Where sparks of knowledge awake from sleep.
An educator's role—both strong and kind,
To shape the body, the heart, the mind.
Through struggles faced and crossroads near,
Resilience triumphs over doubt and fear.
With compassion, joy, and patient grace,
They guide each child to their rightful place.
To nurture values, to teach what's true,
To plant the seeds that one day grew—
Into trees of wisdom, fruitful and free,
Spreading their gifts to society.
And in this noble, timeless art,
A teacher leaves a lasting part.
Proud to serve, with soul unshaken,
A true human being—the best vocation.
The world may change, yet still shall stay,
The light a teacher gives away.
For in each life their radiance lies—
A beacon bright that never dies.

RAJ SINGH RAJPUROHIT

STUDENT, DEPT OF COMPUTER SCIENCE AND ENGINEERING, JODHPUR INSTITUTE OF ENGINEERING AND TECHNOLOGY

BETWEEN CHALK AND DREAMS

I've sat in rooms where silence grew,
And wondered what my heart could do.
The chalk would break, the board would fade,
Yet lessons lingered, gently laid.
Some days were heavy, books felt tall,
I thought I'd stumble, lose it all.
But laughter sparked, a friend reached near,
And struggle softened into cheer.
A teacher's words, a quiet smile,
Carried me forward mile by mile.
These walls have seen me rise, transform,
Through storms of doubt, through nights not warm.
Now when I pause, I start to see,
The classroom's also shaping me.
Not just in grades, but strength inside—
A journey long, a place of pride.

AVIKA BINDAL

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MATHS- A CHALLENGE

Try, try and try,
the more I try,
the more I cry.
I practice maths with my heart and soul,
Yet I am not able to achieve my goal.
I never get marks in maths.
Inspite of my constant endeavours,
Fate is never in my favour.
I really want to improve my maths,
For this I am trying my level best.
I am candid so I confess,
In maths examination I create a mess,
All the answers I guess,
And the marks I get are always less.
I believe if I do ample practice,
One day possibly I'll achieve my goal,
And I seriously have to improve,
Because in our lives maths plays a vital role.

SNEHA DADHICH

STUDENT, JODHPUR INSTITUTE OF ENGINEERING AND TECHNOLOGY

LET ME SLEEP

The wind is getting dirty, poison flowing through my lungs.
The water may seem pure, but it's no longer safe to drink.
 I sit with my family, hidden behind the covers of my screen–
While many die from misfortune, their unheard screams lost in between.
So what if people in Dharavi drink filth, while others drink none?
So what if there's a rape every eight minutes–
at least there are enough women left to be seen.
Don't tell me the poor get no justice, or that Manipur still bleeds.
Hush those voices asking for attention–
I need silence for my dreams.
Let me be the happy fool who believes one religion is pure
while the other is unclean.
Let me think people are only good or bad, with nothing in between.
Let me believe evil only wears the face of my enemy–
While the real abuser wears the mask of kindness and silently reigns.
Don't make me hear the women defiled and buried near sacred ground.
Don't make me hear the animals cry as bulldozers break their bounds.
Don't make me listen to the river, harassed by her own kin.
Don't make me feel the Earth's pain beneath our plastic skin.
Let my country top the charts of rape, disease, and decay–
While I pretend it is only growing.
Let me read the news of strangers' deaths,
While I sigh in relief that I'm still safe.
Let me be the happy fool,
As I kill my nation with silence–
Until there's no one left to save.

PRASHANT SHARMA

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DOORIYAN

Kitno ne likha Maa ke baare me main bhi likh raha
Maa ki mamta kr aanchal me kuch aur na dikh raha
Saari galti beta , raju , teri hi hai
Maa ke ish laad pyaar me tu jyada hi bigda

Raaton se baaton tk hr ek kaam me najar tu aati
Phle pet mera bharti baad me tu khud kuch khati
Laati hai pyaar itna kaha se ish bete ke liye
Tera chehra dekh, aadhi tension to yu mit jaati

Kita bhi chalu aapke bina, kam hi lagta
Kita bhi rhu aapse duur, ek chehra dikhta
Dikhna bhi chahiye aakhir maa ho aap meri
Aapke pyaar ke alawa yaha, kuch na tikta

Bachpan se hi dar lagta tha aapki aankhon se
Galt bhi hoti phir bhi sahmat tha aapki baaton se
Duniya to sirf aapke pyaar ko dekh paayi
Main to waakif hun aapki thappad aur laaton se

Aapke ek ishare uthta baitha krta tha
Aapke ek ishare homework kiya krta tha
Aapke ek ishare pura glass doodh ka pita
Aapke ek ishare time se so jata tha

Sbne girana chaha aur, main bhi fhisla
Maa ke maamta ka aanchal me kuch aur na dikh ra
Saari galti beta , raju , teri hi hai
Maa ke ish laad pyaar me tu jyada hi bigda

Ab tujhse duur hu ish career ki chakkar me
Jb tujhse duur hu to fhasta hu daldal me
Ye daldal kuch aur na bs meri khamoshi hai
Yaad aati hai teri to rota hu chaddar me

Tjhse na baat ki kabhi dhang se yaha aane ke baad
Tjhse na baat ki kabhi dhang se bs ki fariyaad
Tjhse na baat ki kabhi dhang se khulkar maine
Tjhse na baat ki kabhi dhang se bs chutta tera saath

Tere haathon se bana khana aur tu chahiye
Tere haathon ko chantna tu chahiye
Tere haathon se aashirvaad to milta hi hai
Tere haathon se baal sahlana aur tu chahiye

Rukna hai tere liye maa ab aur nhi chal ra
Teri mamta ke aanchal me kuch aur na dikh ra
Saari galti beta , raju , teri hi hai
Maa ke ish laad pyaar me tu jyada hi bigda

These words are my emotions which come to my heart and mind when my mother is away.

DR. C. PRIYA

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AI ERA CLASSROOMS

Where words, in halls that danced so fair,
Now blow the digital dawn's winds there,
A tide turns in time and space,
Where teachers work to guide and increase,
In the radiance of screens' warm light,
They find roots in truths they plant tonight.

The challenge develops like the rose of morn,
With algorithms as the form they take,
But human touch is still composed.
A guiding hand, a lesson sought,
Through digital's relentless prose,
The heart's soft beat is never caught.

Languages weave like threads of light,
In tapestries both old and new,
Teachers, like lanterns in the night,
Illuminate what's pure and true,
With patience shining ever bright,
They turn the tides with hope anew.

Amidst the code and data streams,
The teaching soul finds its way,
A music of schemes and dreams,
That tenderly leads the student's day,
Converting obstacles to gleams,
With the whisper of wisdom, clear and sway.

For each obstacle that confronts us,
An opportunity to grow, to redefine,
Together, banishing fears,
With strength, forge a brighter line,
The voice of future in hopes sincere,
A classroom's light will always shine.

So let us stand with steady hearts,
Embracing change with gentle might,
In every end, a fresh new start,
Where human warmth ignites the light,
And from these shifting, woven parts,
Emerges learning's lasting flight.

AVISHA SAXENA

STUDENT, DEPT OF COMPUTER SCIENCE AND ENGINEERING, JODHPUR INSTITUTE OF ENGINEERING AND TECHNOLOGY

"THIS POEM REFLECTS HOW SEASONS, LIKE TEACHERS, SHAPE US WITH LESSONS OF FRAGILITY, RESILIENCE, AND RENEWAL. EVERY AUTUMN LEAF, EVERY WINTER FROST, IS A CLASSROOM OF ITS OWN."

The tiny drops
that fall from your misty eyes,
pure as a dove,
shake the foundations of forests
far and wide.
You are the autumn—
full of rustle and dust.
The parched leaves
mirror your present,
the fallen ones
carry your past,
and the new twigs
hold your future—
tender, bright,
unfolding with light.
You are the winter—
the beginning of endings,
as strong as ice,
unyielding, insurmountable.
You are an era of the winter's arch,
a realm where warriors
are quietly forged.

DIXITA DEKA

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POTLUCK PEDAGOGY: TEACHING FOODWAYS TO FUTURE ATTORNEYS

In literal terms, participants in a potluck show up with food, which they have cooked, gathered or bought, and share it with others over games and stories. It goes beyond an act of commensality. My first accidental potluck was with my five friends in the US. What was planned to be a Bollywood Night initially turned out to be a proper Thanksgiving potluck in November 2024 at East Rock in New Haven. We were all in the same neighborhood and were affiliated to Yale as employees, graduate students, or on fellowship programs. Except one, we all had South Asian roots. It was over an informal conference call that we got to know about each other's food allergies, taste buds, and dietary restrictions. It was not about taking any food to the table, but an intentional decision to accommodate as much as possible for everyone to enjoy the meal. What was to be a Bollywood Night with Drinks and Dance, became a beautiful potluck of memories over homemade food for six of us living far away from home.

A few months later, I went to the University of California Santa Cruz (UCSC) for a talk. I was stunned to see anthropologist Professor Dolly Kikon carrying a box full of homemade chicken for her students. 'They are going to bring their own rice and breads,' she said. I knew it was going to be fun from my own experience with the Thanksgiving potluck which strengthened my bond with my new friends. While the potluck culture is common in the US, both in academic spaces and otherwise, commensality was very much embedded in the lifeways of the people of Northeast India, the region I come from. Sharing food, cooked or raw, is a part of the everyday. Community feasts are still common amongst the indigenous communities of the region. Marriages and Funerals do not leave the people in debt, for it becomes a shared responsibility of the community. Taking these values back to the classrooms in India, through a potluck pedagogy, I believe could deepen the meaning of education and learning.

In April 2025, when I was drafting a new elective course, Foodways: Understanding Food Stories, Practice and Politics, for one of the top law schools in India, I not only wanted to include key texts and introduce to my students the academics/researchers/indigenous custodians of land who have inspired my approach to food studies, but I wanted my syllabus to be like a potluck, both metaphorically and literally. Like many, I had a lot of components on my syllabus which could offer ample opportunities to the students to go back to their roots or chase answers to political questions related to food. My intention was not just to share information with the class but to develop a pedagogy of co-learning and care where students can become more attentive to their food choices and experiences, and I learn how to engage with the Gen Zs in a more meaningful way.

As a postdoctoral associate with the Program in Agrarian Studies at Yale University, a program developed by anthropologist James C. Scott, I was inspired by the stories and experiences people had to share about him. People remembered him fondly for his out-of-the box pedagogies. A documentary, In A Field All His Own: The Life and Career of James C. Scott was released in 2024 at Yale University months before he passed away. It could be inferred from the documentary that how his vibrant experiences and experiments with academic disciplines and communities he worked with could make his writings accessible to read, and he himself was remembered to be approachable either at his office or in his farm. Many have had chicken eggs directly from his farms. I sought motivation in his kind of mentorship.

As I proposed my course, I was in a dilemma if the 'potluck' component would be approved by the Academic Review Committee in a law school where they would mostly have moot courts. I was also unsure if the future attorneys would be interested to study about food at all. When the course was approved, I reached out to the farmers I worked with. They mentored me significantly in sharing the stories of seeds and the land with the students. On my first class, I let the students touch the heirloom seeds I collected from my field sites in Assam. It was not a class of Agronomy or Botany, but there was a need to bring special guests sometimes to the classroom, like the seeds.

While a couple of students shared how the 'potluck' component on the syllabus fascinated them, I was delighted to know their personal interests in pursuing the course. The idea of seed sovereignty and food sovereignty left them curious. They wanted to know how it was different from food security. For some, food was a respite as they loved cooking, eating, or gardening. Some were curious to know how people negotiate with their food choices in the society, be it with the question of 'dirty food' of the marginalised castes and tribes in India, or stories of South Asian immigrants in the Asian stores abroad. Many of my students were migrants themselves leaving their home states for education and who missed their comfort food. I made them write about their comfort food during the class. That was out of syllabus. Their responses reflected their empathetic and inquisitive side. Most of them not only missed the 'authentic' taste of the food cooked by their mothers or grandmothers, they were also attentive to the gender division of work in the kitchen spaces they saw while growing up in India. Some wrote about the comfort food they found in the state they migrated to. The trimester began by connecting the contents of the syllabus with the everyday conversations around food, farming, agrarian communities, eating habits, and the politics around it.

One of the components for evaluation was to review any book of their choice touching upon the themes of the syllabus. The intentions were many. One, to be able to read a complete book. Two, to find a book on food beyond the syllabus. Three, to get the privilege of completing any unfinished reading. At the end of the deadline, they were able to come up with a fascinating reading list which was circulated amongst them, and which also became an important resource for the course.

The other component for evaluation was to write a term paper. I gave them the freedom to choose any topic around the themes of the syllabus. Many ideas also emerged based on the classroom conversations starting from the Green Revolution, GI tags, farmers' protests, division of labour, old and new crops to Instagram food, prison food, lost cuisines, political food amongst others. These essays were written under a tight deadline. Though it lacked deeper engagement with the field but many papers were based on lived experiences. It gave most of them the opportunity to connect to their families, mostly older people, in documenting the food stories from the past. Though their papers might need professional editing for publication purpose, it gloriously illustrated and addressed some urgent conversations in India today.

Some days we saw documentaries, read posters, pamphlets and policy newsletters, and constantly exchanged information about community engagement programs and exhibitions around the theme of sustainable food systems. One day, we also spent some time shutting the laptop screens and meditating for ten minutes. It was needed to bring the students back to the classroom in spirit after a tough weekend of campus placement. The course was a potluck of emotions where I assume students learnt to see the social, cultural, and political dimensions of food beyond its nourishment.

In literal terms, we did organize a potluck. Except one student, nobody ever attended a potluck. When I shared with them the idea of a potluck, their curious expressions also took me under pressure. I anticipated my elective course would have around ten students, and hence, the potluck would be easier to organize. The turn up for the course was overwhelming with around thirty students, and we decided to distribute the work. Although the students were from the same campus, they came from different batches and courses which implied less interactions amongst them. There were seniors and juniors, old and new, and students from Undergraduate and Masters course. They were from all over India. The potluck, although organized at the end of the trimester, was the opportunity to leave the class with new friends.

I asked each student to bring food for two people. They could either do it individually or in small groups. There was no pressure for anyone to attend or bring food. They could just join and share their food stories. It was to be a 3 pm potluck. I had a difficult time deciding what to take for the students. As most of them did not have access to kitchens, they were to buy the food. I wanted to take cooked food. As a migrant myself in Bengaluru, I found it tough to find ingredients or the traditional utensils or for that matter the time to prepare any ethnic delicacy. The potluck also made me reflect upon the significance of the agrarian seasons to be able to procure certain ingredients for certain delicacies. It made me think about the ways climate change could fast affect our cultural and culinary practices. It was also my own yearning for home, and the potluck made me go back to my mother's recipes or the recipes I learnt from friends. I cooked bread cutlets which my mother used to pack for my school tiffin. I cooked dry honey chicken, an easy recipe I learnt from YouTube when I was living in the US alone. I cooked some biscuit pudding which was taught by a college friend, which so far had remained the best received dessert every time I hosted anyone. The potluck was not a time to experiment with my culinary skills, but to try the old tested ones. From the Northeast palate, I kept singju, the best salad for that time of the day.

The students were in a dilemma to choose the location where the potluck was to be organized in the campus. Some wanted to have it at the Amphitheater, a central location where events were organized. Others wanted to have it near the Basketball Court, which was closer to the college gate making it easier for commute. As it was a dog friendly campus where the students themselves volunteered to vaccinate them, we thought organizing the potluck near the Basketball Court would have more participants, the dogs. We settled for the Amphitheater. The students brought food mostly from the local shops and vendors. Most of the food they brought were meaningful to them, something which brought them solace away from home. Some of them cooked on the induction cooktops available in their hostels. Some cooked with friends at their place. Some cooked for friends for the very first time. Their efforts were commendable in bringing a diverse spread together. They took great care to bring food which was local, healthy, or meant for special occasions.

I allotted them the work to stage the food together. They were surprised how staging all the cuisines together offered a phenomenal assortment. Once it was done, I asked them to observe the spread carefully and make mental notes on the food, what fascinated them, what made them curious about the spread, how was the taste like. I asked the students to share about the dish they brought if they wanted to. I shared the stories behind mine. Some of them shared how the potluck reminded them of their childhood friends and how they would share food during recess. For some, it was refreshing and welcoming where everyone would contribute and eat together, something which was definitely out of the curriculum. The potluck gave an opportunity to the students to eat with mindfulness.

The idea was also to practice the art of giving, sharing, and community building. As a teacher of Foodways, I bore witness to the excitement and the happiness in the students who were moving around the spread deciding what to eat, asking each other to pass on a particular dish, serving food to their friends, appreciating the taste, sharing recipes, and also helping each other pack the leftovers. Once everyone finished eating, it was also upon us to leave the Amphitheater clean and we disposed the paper plates in the appropriate trash cans.

The potluck reminded me of my graduate school in Guwahati where there were two teachers, Professor Sanjay Barbora and Dr.Prashant Kesharvani who would either take us to the nearby coffee shop for the class (we were a small cohort of 8 students) or would buy us tea and snacks in the classroom. They would do that often. It was not about the coffee but the practice which someway made the students feel comfortable and build a community.

It also reminded me of my mentor at Yale, Professor K.Sivaramakrishnan who would always ask the catering service to bring extra boxes (Aluminium foil containers) for the students to carry food after events. Food was a way to express care and nurture relationships. Food was the easiest way to connect and express solidarity beyond the boundaries of age, gender, class, caste, religion, region or ethnicity. For some of my students, the potluck was a treat to their mental health and for others, it helped them come out and communicate. The potluck was a respite from the tension, politics, and hostilities around food that we discussed in the course. I asked my students to describe the potluck in one word.

They shared: wholesome, heartening, memorable, and a celebration. These were terms I suppose gracefully captured the spirit of the potluck pedagogy.

KUSHAGRA GARG
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CHRONICLES OF POSSIBILITY: REIMAGINING PEDAGOGICAL PRAXIS IN THE AGE OF MULTIMODAL CONSCIOUSNESS

We stand at a remarkable juncture in the annals of educational thought, where the very foundations of pedagogical practice undergo seismic transformation. The call issued by the Indian Sociological Society's ADHOC Research Committee on Pedagogy, Teaching and Learning represents far more than an invitation for submission—it constitutes a clarion call for epistemic revolution. In these pages, we shall traverse the evolving landscape of contemporary education, where traditional boundaries dissolve and new modalities of knowing emerge with unprecedented urgency and possibility. The nomenclature "Pedagogie Chronicles" itself signals a departure from conventional educational discourse. It suggests not merely the documentation of teaching practices, but the active chronicling of transformation—the ongoing narrative of how learning spaces become sites of profound human becoming. This essay seeks to illuminate the multidimensional tapestry of contemporary pedagogy, where critical consciousness, technological integration, and embodied knowledge converge to create educational experiences of unprecedented depth and resonance.

The Ontological Foundations of Transformative Pedagogy

Contemporary pedagogic practice finds itself in thrall to what Jack Mezirow described as the "disorienting dilemma" of historically unprecedented planetary complexity. Conventional modes of knowledge transmission, founded on hierarchical teacher-learner relationships, increasingly cannot meet the cosmopolitan demands of our interdependent world. Arising from what we can call "multimodal pedagogical consciousness" is a revolution in our thinking about the very essence of educational encounter. Paulo Freire's transformative challenge to the "banking model" of education has a special ring to it in our digital era. His vision of education as freedom's practice—students becoming critical collaborators with teachers in the investigation of reality—finds new expression in twenty-first-century pedagogic innovation. The classroom ceases to be a space of reception and instead becomes, in bell hooks' phrase, "a location of possibility" wherein mutual vulnerability and radical openness generate prospects for real transformation. This philosophical basis supports twenty-first-century pedagogic innovations most centrally: recognition that all learning is embodied, culture-situated, and politically configured. Contemporary teachers increasingly grasp that pedagogic decision-making cannot be neutral—it either functions to domesticate consciousness or to foster critical understanding of forces configuring our world.

The Architecture of Engaged Learning

Structural shifts in education space mirror deeper epistemological changes in how knowledge is created and transmitted. Conventional classrooms with their focus on teacher-led transmission and student reception yield to interactive, collaborative space that respects diverse ways of knowing and being.

Inquiry-Led Learning and Critical Consciousness

Today's focus of pedagogy is increasingly on inquiry-led modes that position students as active knowledge constructors and not passive recipients. This methodological shift parallels that of Freire's idea of conscientização—construction of critical consciousness by reflection on one's place in the world. Students are no longer dealing with abstract concepts but with lived experiences that surround their world, and their education builds that which we can recognize as "sociological imagination" in the class room space. The merging of project-based education is a fine example of that shift. Students no longer receive ready-to-eat knowledge but collectively work on real-life studies that address real world issues in their own communities. This pedagogic shift considers that worthwhile learning occurs when students can connect academic concepts to their own lived world and social worlds.

Technology as Liberation or Domestication

The mass incorporation of digital technologies into learning environments holds great promise and risk. Used critically, technology can democratize access to knowledge, connect learners globally, and enable experiential learning that overcomes conventional boundaries. Used uncritically, however, it can reinforce prevailing inequalities and bracket complex human relations in algorithmic processes. The adoption of multimodal systems of learning is one such encouraging trend. Multimodal systems of learning acknowledge that students have varied modes of intelligence and ways of knowing and therefore learn better with experiences that embrace multiple senses and modes of taking in knowing. Used with generative artificial intelligences, these systems can produce individually tailored paths of learning that respond to personal needs while affirming allegiance to collective freedom.

The Somatic Dimensions of Learning

Among the most remarkable innovations of recent pedagogies is acknowledging embodied knowledge and processes of somatic learning. Western education has tended historically to value cognitive, abstract modes of knowing over bodily wisdom and knowledge of experience. In its dualistic contrast, it has harmed most of all students who come from cultural traditions of holistic, integral modes of knowledge. The inclusion of Body-Mind Centering and somatic practices in classrooms is a reflection of increased recognition that learning is essentially embodied. Students bring their whole selves—such as their bodily experiences, emotional biography, and cultural knowledge—into classrooms. Teachers who acknowledge that reality produce space for students to access other modes of intelligence and expression.

Practical applications involve movement education activities, mindfulness practices, and creative activities that involve multiple modalities of perception. In these ways, these practices are especially useful with students who were marginalized by mainstream academic practices, such as indigenous students, students with differences in learning, and students who come from cultural traditions that value non-linear, holistic processes of knowing.

Aesthetic Teaching and Transformative Art

Arts integration is another essential aspect of modern pedagogical innovation. Instead of viewing artistic expression as auxiliary to "genuine" academic study, teachers increasingly view aesthetic experience as integral to knowledge construction and critical consciousness building. The Indian situation offers especially strong illustrations of such integration, since indigenous knowledge systems have never known anything other than an aesthetic and embodied understanding of learning. Lyrical art traditions, oral traditions of story and drama, and cultural practices are all being brought into academic curricula in ways that not only respect students' cultural traditions but produce more interesting and efficacious learning experiences.

The Decolonializing of Educational Imagination

Quite likely, one of the most substantive changes in contemporary pedagogy is decolonizing education practices and putting at its center historically marginalized knowledge systems. It stretches far beyond curricular diversification to challenge the epistemological assumptions that underlie education systems.

Traditional Indigenous Knowledge and Teaching Practice

The integration of indigenous knowledge systems disrupts Western academic traditions' hold over legitimate knowledge. Indigenous pedagogies of old focus on relationality, reciprocity, and responsibility—principles that stand in stark contrast to individualistic, competitive modes that prevail in mainstream educational environments. Its practical implications involve land-based learning, intergenerational transmission of knowledge, and decision-making processes respecting collective wisdom. These practices are especially useful for indigenous students but hold rich lessons for every student regarding sustainable relationships with human and more-than-human worlds.

Culturally Responsive and Sustaining Teaching

The construction of culturally responsive pedagogies acknowledges that quality education needs to draw upon students' cultural knowledge while granting access to dominant cultural capital. In doing so, it steers clear of cultural deficit thinking and romantic multiculturalism by taking students' cultural assets to serious account in learning environments. Latest implications encompass multilingual pedagogies, curricula that are culturally responsive, and pedagogies that respect diverse patterns of communications and ways of knowing. These practices are of especial value in situations whereby students from deprived communities have historically been denied access to educational achievement.

Digital Transformation of Teaching Space

The integration of digital technologies in educational settings represents one of the most visible transformations in contemporary pedagogy. However, the most significant changes involve not merely technological adoption but fundamental reconceptualization of how learning occurs in networked, digitally mediated environments.

Hybrid and Blended Learning Approaches

Forced experimentation with remote learning in response to the COVID-19 pandemic hastened adoption of hybrid and blended approaches to learning. Although initial applications tended to replicate traditional class arrangements in digital modes, increasingly nuanced approaches acknowledge the special affordances of digital environments for facilitating collaborative, inquiry-oriented experiences of learning. Hybrid pedagogies that are successful interleave synchronous and asynchronous activities, harness digital tools for collaborative construction of knowledge, and afford students access to diverse standpoints beyond their immediate geographical situation. These models are especially useful for students who are inhibited from participating in conventional class situations, such as working adults, parents, and students living in remote locations.

Critical Digital Pedagogy

The emergence of critical digital pedagogy represents a particularly promising development. This approach applies critical pedagogical principles to digital learning environments, questioning power relationships embedded in educational technologies and creating opportunities for students to become critical consumers and creators of digital content. Practical applications include digital storytelling projects that center marginalized voices, collaborative online investigations of social issues, and critical analysis of algorithmic bias in educational platforms. These approaches recognize that digital literacy involves not merely technical skills but critical understanding of how digital systems shape social relationships and knowledge production.

Assessment for Transformative Learning

Traditional assessment processes, with their emphasis on standardization, ranking, and individual competitiveness, all-too-frequently undermine critical pedagogy's transformative potential. Educational innovation today more often than not sieht assessment as a moment of extending deep knowing and encouraging critical consciousness rather than being merely a measurement of predetermined outcomes.

Authentic and Community-Embedded Assessments

Building real assessment practices demonstrates commitment to student learning measurement in environments that mirror real-world application. Instead of standardized, decontextualized tests by themselves, teachers offer students opportunity to demonstrate knowledge in community-engaged projects, creative presentation, and collaborative problem-solving. Portfolio assessment,

peer assessment, and self-assessment processes teach students to become directly involved in their own assessment rather than passively accepting outside verdict. Techniques are of particular benefit to students whose own cultures center on communal achievement and holistic assessment rather than individual competition.

Learning to Teach in Higher Education

Modern conceptions of assessment increasingly focus on formative over summative assessment. This direction acknowledges that assessment is most strong when it takes the form of continuous conversation between teachers and students regarding their progress with learning, problems with learning, and aspirations for future growth. Best practices for formative assessment involve frequent check-ins, shared goal-setting, and chances for students to reflect upon their own processes of learning. These help to respect students as knowing subjects able to take stewardship of their own learning while also giving teachers information to nurture personal and communal growth.

Teacher Development for Professional Transformation

The evolution of pedagogic practice needs to be accompanied by simultaneous change in how teachers conceptualize their professional roles and obligations. Teacher preparation models that focus on developing technical competence and conformity to mapped curricula are insufficient to prepare teachers to participate in transformative pedagogic practice.

Critical Reflection and Professional Growth

Contemporary teacher development increasingly emphasizes critical reflection on pedagogical assumptions, biases, and practices. This approach recognizes that effective educators must engage in ongoing examination of their own positionality, privilege, and cultural assumptions while developing capacity to learn from their students and communities. Professional learning communities provide crucial support for educators engaging in transformative practice. These collaborative structures create opportunities for teachers to share experiences, analyze challenges, and develop innovative approaches to persistent educational problems.

Culturally Responsive Teacher Preparation

Teacher preparation for increasingly diverse class environments demands intrinsic reconceptualization of teacher preparation programs. Effective programs do not view diversity as a further challenge to be addressed, but instead view cultural diversity as a learner's asset that enhances all learners' experiences. Some of these practices involve immersion experiences among diverse communities, critical studies of education policy and practices, and preparation of skills for working with families and communities to enhance learners' experiences. Such practices equip teachers to interact genuinely with learners from diverse worlds while avoiding cultural deficit thinking and superficial multicultural practices.

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Toward Educational Futures: Emergent Possibilities

Looking out across the current landscape of innovation in pedagogy, some emerging trends indicate future directions for further growth. These prospects start from established bases while gesturing toward still more radically transformative understandings of educational practice.

Transdisciplinary and Ecological Pedagogies

The increasing recognition of global interdependence demands teaching strategies that move beyond conventional disciplinary divisions. Transdisciplinary education involves students in exploring complex issues that demand interdisciplinarity while building capacity for systems thinking and ecological literacy. Climate action education is one such especially urgent application of the method. Instead of viewing environmental concerns as isolated scientific problems, teachers involve students in exploring the social, economic, political, and cultural aspects of climate change while building capacity for consequential action in their own communities.

Artificial Intelligence and Teaching Augmentation

The fast-paced growth of artificial intelligence technologies offers prospects for, as well as threats to, educational practice. Used critically, AI is capable of offering tailored learning assistance, opening up access to diverse sources of knowledge, and complementing human creativity and collaboration. If taken up un-critically, however, AI technologies threaten to entrench prevailing inequalities and to simplify complex human inter-actions to processes of algorithms. Critical digital pedagogy offers lenses for working with these technologies that amplify human agency and inter-connection rather than conceding to these effects.

Global Solidarity and Educational Justice

Today's teaching practice increasingly sees education as a worldwide issue that needs collective action beyond national, cultural, and linguistic differences. Initiatives that bring students together across different situations offer space for developing a sense of global consciousness while fulfilling responsibility to local community needs.

These models understand that education transformation needs systemic reform that deals with determinants of educational inequality instead of bettering individual performance. Educational global citizenship entails sharing of assets, techniques, and wisdom while being considerate of different cultural ways of knowing and learning.

Epilogue: The Chronicle Continues

The submission call to "Pedagogie Chronicles" is more than a scholarly exercise—it is an offer to join in the ongoing construction of educational futures worthy of human dignity and planetary flourishing. The innovations discussed in this essay show that transformative pedagogical practices are not only possible but genuinely taking place in educational settings globally. Yet that transformation demands sustained effort from educators, learners, families, and communities ready to do the hard work of reconceiving educational practices. The classroom as "site of possibility" emerges not from solo heroic effort, but from collective effort devoted to educational justice and human freedom. Our chronicles written today will fashion future generations' educational experiences. Our responsibility as modern educators is not just to enact prevailing innovations but to be active actors in helping to fashion pedagogical practices that respect the full humanity of all learners while taking on our world's complex interrelated challenges.

The process of transformative pedagogy depends upon "critical hope," in Freire's terms, the belief that change is possible, together with a clear-sighted evaluation of current obstacles and limitations. This hope maintains teachers through the challenging work of transforming while leaving room for new pedagogical practices we cannot yet envision to emerge. In ending this consideration of current pedagogical innovation, we find ourselves again with that core realization that gives all transformative educational practice its meaning: that every education encounter embodies, built into it, the capacity for deep human transformation. Depending upon our ability to immerse ourselves sincerely in complexity of human knowing and our dedication to establishing educational environments that respect the density and potential of every learner, that capacity for human transformation is realized or not realized.

The chronicle proceeds, written in our everyday work, our persistent thinking, and our communal commitment to educational transformation. In schools, in community centers, in networked worlds of computers and screens, and in experiential and natural environments around the world, teachers and students collaborated in the simultaneous construction of possible pedagogies that point to more equitable and sustainable futures for education. The challenge to contribute to these chronicles remains—each of us has agency for writing the next chapter in that ongoing narrative of educational transformation.

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FROM CHALKBOARDS TO CHANGE-MAKERS: RE-IMAGINING CLASSROOMS AS SPACES OF TRANSFORMATION.

Abstract

Indian classrooms are the epicentre of an educational revolution that reconfigures democratic possibilities in a hierarchically ordered society. The analysis examines how schooling spaces are both spaces of liberation and reproduction using rich evidence from recent policies, exams, and pedagogies and how India's schooling dynamics emerge. Merging Paulo Freire's critical pedagogy with Pierre Bourdieu's cultural capital theories, the paper argues that Indian classrooms are contested spaces wherein the potential for transformation coincides with immanent oppression across caste, class, geography, and gender. The study integrates findings from the Annual Status of Education Report 2024 that covers data from 649,491 children in 17,997 villages with an analysis of the National Education Policy 2020's ₹1.3 lakh crore outlay. While there is significant recovery from foundational learning—Class 3 children from government schools in the age-and-sex-standardised Proficient Reads metric rose from 16.3% in 2022 to 23.4% in 2024—a staggering 76.6% of children remain unable to read at grade level. The study spotlights how inequalities in digital infrastructure keep schooling out of the reaches of the excluded, with just 57.2% of Indian schools having working computers and just 53.9% with working net connectivity, causing urban (69%) versus rural (45%) connectivity gap of 24 percentage points. The researcher analyses caste discrimination in the classroom and finds that 29% of the schools contain 90% or more members of the same caste. Differential seating and forced labour remain forms of marginalizing the presence of Dalit children even with the legal protection. Programs such as the Mid-Day Meal Scheme contribute to breaking down inter-caste divides as well as malnutrition, whereas grassroots pedagogical experiments provide inclusive schooling approaches. The researcher contends that Indian classrooms should transition from being spaces of reproducing social hierarchy to spaces of critical consciousness and democratic engagement, with the elimination of oppressive institutions and the valuing of the plural cultural capital that all children bring.

Introduction: Educational Transformation at the Crossroads of Democracy

Indian schooling is at the pivot point in which democratic visions are in conflict with societal stratifications. The classroom is as much the place of knowing as the site of the democratic future of India. The argument analyzes the way in which school spaces are tools of liberation and domination, respectively, with evidence that sheds lights on the dynamics in the world's largest democracy.

The legacy of the pioneers like Savitribai Phule who established the first girls school in Pune in 1848 in the face of violent resistance is alive in the struggle today for educational equity. Her habit of carrying an extra sari with which to change the one smeared with mud and stones reflects the pervasive resistance at the Indian level to changes in education. Reformers today face similar but more subtle impediments within institutional arrangements and social customs that engender exclusion.

The National Education Policy 2020 is India's most ambitious bid in this century at transforming the field of education, with ₹1.3 lakh crore over three years being devoted to overhauling the system of learning. Its 5+3+3+4 pattern of school education, stress on foundational literacy and numeracy, and encouragement of the mother-tongue instruction reflect a vision of transformation that desires radical shifts in pedagogy. The issues related to implementation, however, reflect deeper structure-bound inequalities that policy is powerless to redress on its own. New evidence illuminates the achievements and the challenges that remain in Indian school education. The Annual Status of Education Report (ASER) 2024 assessed 649,491 children in as many villages (17,997) across 605 districts and finds strong recovery in foundation-level learning after pandemic disruptions. Class 3 government school children's literacy skill progressed from 16.3% in 2022 to 23.4% in 2024, while arithmetic skill progressed from 28.1% in 2018 to 33.7% in 2024. Nevertheless, 76.6% of Class 3 children remain unable to read at grade level, demonstrating continuous challenges. The COVID-19 pandemic both accelerated and exacerbated learning inequalities. While Indian adolescents aged 14-16 have smartphones, with only 89%, just 57% use smartphones in the field of education, and digital infrastructure inequalities influence learning experiences. Functioning computers are available in only 57.2% of schools, with only 53.9% having internet connectivity, reflecting "digital deprivation." Further, there is also the presence of a gap of as much as 24 percentage points in urban compared with rural schools (69% in urban with digital tools versus only 45% in rural), exacerbating geographic inequalities in education.

Theoretical Framework: Critical Pedagogy and Cultural Capital in Educational Transformation

Interpretating Indian education change entails blending critical pedagogy with sociocultural analysis. Paulo Freire considers schooling a practice of freedom or domestication, where pedagogies can either challenge or assist domination. His critique of the "banking model" of education, where teachers simply deposit things into passive learners, is applicable in India, where hierarchies of educator-learners are prevalent. A study reports Indian teacher education students perceiving institutions as "autocracy masked with democracy," commenting on the tension between democratic discourse and oppressive pedagogic practice that suppresses critical thought. Freire's "culture of silence" is present in Indian classrooms, where students who are discriminated against accept lowly status rather than question discrimination. Introducing critical pedagogy in India entails addressing caste-related discrimination. Systematic exclusion of Dalit children in separate seating and discriminatory food serving is evidence. A Dalit child's report of being forced to "sit in the last row" and made to "clean human excrement outside school" is a classic example of caste domination in education. Pierre Bourdieu's cultural capital framework examines schools as either perpetuating or transforming social arrangements. He identifies three forms of cultural capital: embodied (internalized capabilities), objectified (items of culture), and institutionalized (accredited qualifications), which inform students' educational lives. Predominant students are often found to possess embodied cultural capital corresponding to institutional expectations, such as language proficiency and confidence. Marginalized students contribute much cultural knowing to schools, but it goes untapped and they learn failure messages instead of having the issues of schools identified for them.

It is central to comprehending caste-marginalized learners in India, where traditional knowing does not count. Research shows teachers mark lower-caste students more severely, discriminatory marking being responsible for approximately 20% of the gap in achievement. It agrees with Freire's critique schools are oppressive, not just fair as schools would have us believe.

Digital Infrastructure and the Reproduction of Educational Inequality

The digitization of Indian education has created new opportunities for access but also forms of exclusion that reinforce social hierarchies. UDISE+ 2023-24 data shows that despite investments in technology, infrastructure gaps remain. While 72% of schools have internet through DIKSHA and PM e-Vidya, this masks rural-urban disparities that drive educational inequalities. The 24 percentage point gap between urban (69%) and rural schools (45%) creates a barrier to educational equity for millions. This divide worsened during COVID-19 when continuity relied on digital access. Research by the Azim Premji Foundation found 60% of Indian school children lacked online learning during closures, resulting in "digital deprivation" with long-term effects. Digital exclusion hits marginalized communities hardest, with rural tele-density (59%) far lower than urban (134%) as of March 2024. These disparities reveal broader structural inequalities in electricity, internet, and digital literacy. Only 4% of rural households have computers compared to 23% in urban areas, showing how digital exclusion ties to social and economic marginalization.

Research on digital classrooms is both promising and limiting. HDFC Bank's School Transformation Program installed 100 digital classrooms in CRPF schools, which demonstrated significant gains in student engagement and learning outcomes. The teachers reported a 92% increase in creativity, 87% in thinking skill, and 85% in concept retention after the implementation. Still, all of these benefits were in privileged spaces with consistent power, trained teachers, and technical support—a scenario rarely available in the rural Indian government school context. The BharatNet program was supposed to link 600,000 villages with fiber connectivity by the end of May 2023 but only connected 214,000 as of October 2024, exhibiting the lacunas that maintain digital marginalization. Such setbacks specifically impact the Scheduled Caste and Scheduled Tribe children who are already at the disadvantage when it comes to education.

Caste Discrimination and Institutional Practices in Educational Settings

Caste discrimination in Indian schools inhibits democratic learning despite protections in law. A survey in 2025 discovered 29% of schools had student bodies more than 90% homogenous, pushing marginally placed students to the peripheries and out of activities. Even in Tamil Nadu, with its anti-caste image, Dalit students were denied food and expelled from meal schemes by dominant caste students. More subtle are "invisible acts of caste discrimination" in neutral practice, prejudicing marginally placed students, such as reduction in grades for Dalits, indifference from teachers, and denigration of their cultural learning. Caste, gender, and religious biases, as Rawal and Kingdon demonstrate, perpetuate systemic injustices and mask institutional discrimination. Mental stress from discrimination goes beyond schools; in extreme cases, it is described as "institutional murder" related to suicides of students.

Dalit activists describe the phrase to identify systemic violations. Suicide of Rohit Vemula, a doctoral research scholar at the Central University of Hyderabad, brought educational exclusion and discrimination to attention. Discrimination persists in spite of such protections as the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes (Prevention of Atrocities) Act of 1989 and the Right to Education Act of 2009. The gap between such legal protections and actual practice reflects Freire's notion of consciousness, revealing how the former regards situations as natural and the latter as socially constructed and transformable. Caste-based segregation did not change much from 2007-08 to 2017-18. Such segregation goes hand-in-hand with recorded discrimination from open exclusion to insidious bias in affecting educational opportunities for students from excluded castes. Caste exclusion in education takes both explicit and latent forms of exclusion and generates hostile learning climates for Dalit and Adivasi students. Direct practices involve deliberate corporal punishment for students from lower castes, forced cleaning responsibilities, and separate seating.

Policy Implementation and Grassroots Innovation in Educational Transformation

National Education Policy 2020 (NEP 2020) has been India's biggest education reform since independence, and it seeks to transform the educational system through structural reform and equity initiatives. It is well implemented with 1.15 lakh students from disadvantaged sections in residential schools, 7.58 lakh girl children earning education access, and 4.2 crore students in 8.9 lakh schools availing the NIPUN Bharat literacy missions. Experiential learning and mother-tongue education are important aspects of the 5+3+3+4 Curricular Structure. NEP 2020 is constrained in implementation through structural challenges. Government expenditure on education is below 6% of the Gross Domestic Product (GDP), and funds available for reform are limited. It stirs controversy through issues such as abolishing the three-language formula and common entrance examinations, with various states such as Tamil Nadu and West Bengal resisting policies against linguistic diversity. It faces challenges through contradictions in centralized reform for federal compulsions in Indian federalism. Teacher education holds the key in requiring 50 hours of Continuous Professional Development each year. NISHTHA provides comprehensive online training in focus on foundational literacy and innovative pedagogy. 4-year integrated B.Ed. Programs integrate subject proficiency with pedagogy. Grassroots innovations also seek to augment classrooms through policy reform. ASER survey reveals approaches taken through communities achieve high learning returns. Teaching at the Right Level (TaRL) enhances literacy and numeracy for disadvantaged children in functional skill rather than through grade-specific curricula. It accelerates learning through adaptable pedagogy. Mid-Day Meal Scheme reduces educational inequalities through expanded enrollment, attendance, and reduced dropouts. It also reduces malnutrition, with increased enrollment and child welfare. Studies confirm steady participation reduces the risk of being underweight, in a direct benefit for Scheduled Tribes, Scheduled Castes, and girls. Common dining also promotes caste intermingling, transcending social hierarchies and documenting the transformational potential of education.

Critical Analysis: Pedagogical Transformation and Democratic Possibility

Indian classrooms' banking model of education impedes democratic transformation. Albeit policies for student-centered learning, teaching methods are stagnant as evidenced in ASER 2024. Where 66.3% of Class 3 and 70% of Class 5 students are innumerate, rote learning supersedes concept learning. Such stagnation is perpetuated through traditional teacher education, evaluation plans in favor of standardized tests, and restricting student inquiry. Scholarship portrays authoritarian teacher education as a form of "autocracy masked with democracy," where liberal discourse and oppressive practice coexist in inhibiting critical thought. Educators can democratize pedagogical relations through a shift from prevailing associations with students. Non-traditional pedagogies such as Freire's problem-positing pedagogy present opportunities for democratized practice. Community-oriented projects, local exploration towards ecological learning, and arts-infusion present possibilities for pedagogical transformation, focusing on dialogue, critical inquiry, peer learning, and an appreciation of students' cultural knowledge. Bourdieu's cultural capital implies possibilities for transforming social hierarchies. Privileged students harmonize cultural capital with institutional norms, while disadvantaged students are subject to devaluation. Successful teachers use disadvantaged students' cultural capital rather than regarding it as a lack. Approaches involve mother-tongue education appreciating linguistic diversity, indigenous projects as a form of cultural knowledge, and arts education appreciating various traditions. It is necessary to transform Indian classrooms through challenging structural inequity in the social, economic, and politicking spheres. Dropouts rose from 5.2% in middle schools to 10.9% in secondary, spelling out systemic issues of economic coercion, exclusion on the basis of gender, exclusion on the basis of caste, and infrastructure issues. These are reflec-tions of deeper social inequities educational reform will not address. ASER 2024 reports only 55.2% of girls aged 14 to 16 can create private online profiles, exposing worsening gendered inequity in internet use. Therefore, plans for digital inclusion must reach deeper than technology access to culturally relevant awareness and social protection for safe use of the internet.

Structural Transformation and Democratic Education

Achieving democratic education in India requires a systemic restructuring of structural inequities impacting classrooms. Economic challenges bar access, compelling poor families to choose survival over education. Gender demands are harsh, with nearly 40% of Indian girls dropping out of school after Class 10 in response to home responsibilities and cultural norms, combined with a lack of facilities such as gender-specific toilet rooms. Caste exclusion additionally multiplies disadvantages for excluded students, entwining economic and gender inequities. School discriminatory practice is a reflection of broader societal opinion judging Dalit and Adivasi students as incompetent, with resulting under-resourcing of schools, depressed achievement expectations, and exclusionary culture. Infrastructural shortcomings make educational experience in rural areas worse, with almost 60% of secondary schools in urban areas, thereby underserving rural communities. Impoverished transportation and challenging terrains contribute to difficulties in accessing schools, while teacher deficiencies in rural areas, with a single teacher for numerous subjects and grades, critically affects educational quality.

Overcoming structural obstacles requires coordinated efforts from different areas of policies in addition to education. Economic security initiatives such as employment assurances, social protection, and selective economic subsidies for disadvantaged families are essential for getting children into schools. Investments in transportation, internet connectivity, and physical infrastructure for schools involve huge medium-term government investment.

It asks us to question cultural norms and social values for perpetuating inequity in converting Indian classrooms to places of democracy. It cannot be implemented through a policy; it must arise out of a sense of engagement with communities, a sensitivity for different ways of knowing, and a commitment for real inclusion rather than tokenism.

Conclusion: Toward Democratic Educational Transformation

Indian classrooms represent both promise and challenge in learning. Statistics show progress in post-pandemic literacy and numeracy but persistent inequalities on the basis of caste, class, gender, and geography continue to limit entry and quality. A synthesis of Freire's pedagogy and Bourdieu's cultural capital theory places attention on the necessity for educational change to listen to pedagogy and structural inequity. Classrooms' banking model represents outdated practice and preference for certain kinds of knowledge. Educators must shift from depositors of only knowledge to mutual brokers of students' cultural capital. India's digital revolution represents both promise and failure of technology-intensive reform. Technology can reach out and innovative learning but durability of digital divides reveals social inequities documenting technology's ineffectiveness on its own in correcting structural flaw. A 24-point gap in rural-urban infrastructure for digital space highlights regionally grounded disparity necessitating government investment. Caste exclusion from schools represents the possibility for classrooms themselves to remain unjust in spite of assertions of equality. Nearly 29% of schools are over 90% caste-homogeneous with norms such as separate seating reflecting ineffectuality of legal protection in correcting culture of institution. On the contrary, interventions such as the Mid-Day Meal Scheme are testimonial to the efficacy of good education policies in increasing inter-caste mingling and correcting nutritional deficiencies. Reform such as child-centered learning and Teaching at the Right Level focus on students rather than on rigid curricula. Democratic educational reform in India requires frequent structural and cultural change. Teacher training, infrastructure, and resource shortcomings must-be-addressed in policies, and discrimination must-be-challenged. Relationships of students-teachers must shift from authority to respect and cooperation. National Education Policy 2020 promotes holistic, multilingual, inclusive methods while trying to break through barriers. Teacher education must develop critical consciousness to question oppression and develop inclusiveness. Educational reform must change Indian classrooms from inequity spaces to centers of critical thought and social change. Borrowing on Freire's notion of education as liberation, teachers and students must collaborate to question oppression. It is necessary and possible. Examples from data of ASER 2024, as well as achievements from the Mid-Day Meal Scheme and Pratham Foundation, show Indian classrooms are capable of embracing democratic change. It takes a commitment to equity, inclusion, and a pedagogy respecting every student's dignity and possibility. Indian democracy's future depends on recasting classrooms towards critical awareness and social change. It takes a profound rethink on educational aims and approaches anchored on justice, equity, and human dignity.

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"POWER IS A UBIQUITOUS PHENOMENON": AN INTERPRETATION

To grasp a phrase as complex yet concise as the one in the title, we must examine the words that form its essence: power, ubiquitous, and phenomenon. My interpretation is grounded in human observation, free from prejudice that might obscure reality. Whether described as realism or spirituality, it remains an attempt to make sense of a universal idea.

The concept of power has been central to political thought and social theory for centuries, appearing in works ranging from classical philosophy to modern sociology. Yet, despite its ubiquity, it remains contested and multifaceted. To say that "power is a ubiquitous phenomenon" is to recognise that it pervades not only institutions of governance but also human relationships, cultural practices, and even the quiet workings of everyday life.

'Power' is often conflated with 'authority'. Yet a fine line separates them, much like the difference between a leader and a dictator. Both operate through power and authority, but their use differs fundamentally. Power enables authority but is not authority itself. It may be wielded to dominate or to inspire change. A revolution can be as intense as a reform movement: one demands sacrifice and bloodshed, the other patience and perseverance. Both require courage.

The sociologist Max Weber famously distinguished between power (Macht) as the ability to enforce one's will against resistance, and authority (Herrschaft) as legitimate power accepted by those subject to it. For Weber, authority could take different forms—traditional, charismatic, or legal-rational—each drawing its legitimacy from different sources. This highlights the fact that power, while necessary for authority, does not guarantee legitimacy.

Hannah Arendt offered an even sharper distinction. In her influential work On Violence, she argued that power is not synonymous with coercion or violence. Rather, power arises when people act together, when collective agreement transforms individual will into shared purpose. Authority, in her view, belongs to established traditions or institutions, but power emerges dynamically whenever humans engage in concerted action. This suggests that power, unlike authority, is fragile and relational—dependent on the consent and cooperation of others.

Power does not always signify physical strength. It may also be the steadfastness of the human mind or the resilience of character. Throughout history, some of the most profound demonstrations of power have come not from domination but from restraint, conviction, and the moral courage to resist injustice.

Consider Mahatma Gandhi's philosophy of satyagraha, or truth-force. Gandhi rejected violent confrontation, insisting instead on the transformative power of non-violent resistance. His approach illustrates that power is not always about coercion; it can also be about shaping moral consciousness, influencing both oppressors and the oppressed. Martin Luther King Jr., inspired by Gandhi, similarly demonstrated that power can manifest in patience, dignity, and collective resolve.

Michel Foucault, by contrast, shifted the discussion away from individuals and institutions to focus on how power circulates through society itself. In his view, power is not something one possesses; rather, it operates in relations, shaping knowledge, behaviour, and identity. Power is everywhere because it comes from everywhere: in the classroom, in the hospital, in the prison, in the workplace. Through surveillance, discipline, and norms, power produces subjects rather than merely repressing them. This idea underscores its ubiquity—it is embedded in the very fabric of our daily lives.

'Ubiquitous' means ever-present. Power is ubiquitous because it influences across contexts and scales. Whether expressed in a speech that moves masses or in a quiet exchange between teacher and student, its capacity to shape thought remains the same.

Political scientist Steven Lukes offered one of the most influential frameworks for understanding this ubiquity in his Three Dimensions of Power. The first dimension refers to visible conflict—one actor prevailing over another in decision-making. The second dimension points to hidden forms of power, such as setting the agenda or preventing issues from being discussed. The third dimension is the deepest: the power to shape desires and perceptions themselves, so that people accept outcomes that may not serve their interests. This model reveals why power is so difficult to locate or resist—it often operates beneath awareness.

Examples of this abound in the modern world. Advertising, for instance, demonstrates Lukes' third dimension: it shapes our desires, making consumption appear natural or even necessary. Global politics also illustrate ubiquity. Joseph Nye's concept of soft power shows that influence can extend beyond military might or economic coercion; it also resides in culture, values, and attraction. A Hollywood film or a K-pop band may exercise as much influence on global imaginations as formal diplomacy.

The word 'phenomenon' has two principal meanings. It can denote a factual or natural event, such as the northern lights, or a remarkable person or thing, such as a live performance so enthralling that it engages every sense. Both usages point to experiences that leave indelible impressions—memorable, transformative, and powerful.

Power often manifests as such a phenomenon: an event or encounter that alters our perspective. The fall of the Berlin Wall in 1989, for example, was not merely a political moment but a phenomenon of global significance. It symbolised the collapse of an ideological order and reshaped how millions understood the possibilities of freedom and democracy. Likewise, the rise of social media has been a phenomenon in its own right, redistributing power from traditional institutions to networks of individuals, influencers, and online communities. Power, then, is not merely structural or relational; it is also experiential. It becomes real in the way it moves us, shapes our memory, and alters our sense of self.

Understanding power as a ubiquitous phenomenon also requires looking beyond Western theories. In Confucian traditions, power is often tied to harmony, virtue, and moral leadership. Authority is not legitimate unless it aligns with the mandate of heaven and promotes the common good. In contrast, Indigenous worldviews frequently understand power not as domination but as balance—an energy shared among humans, animals, and nature.

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These perspectives remind us that power need not always imply hierarchy; it can also mean interconnection and responsibility.

Antonio Gramsci's idea of hegemony bridges these insights. For Gramsci, power is maintained not simply through coercion but through cultural consent—through values, ideas, and norms that become common sense. This explains why power is so deeply rooted: it works not only through laws or force but through the stories societies tell about themselves.

To call power a ubiquitous phenomenon is to acknowledge both its omnipresence and its transformative potential. It is found in structures of governance, in acts of resistance, in the quiet exchanges of daily life, and in the innermost resilience of the human spirit. Weber, Arendt, Foucault, Lukes, Gramsci, Nye, and many others each illuminate different dimensions of this truth, showing us that power can be coercive, legitimate, relational, cultural, or invisible —yet always consequential.

My interpretation, while deeply personal, resonates with theirs: power surrounds us not as an external force alone, but as a lived experience. It is the current that shapes memory, identity, and history itself, reminding us that to live is, inevitably, to encounter power in its many forms. To recognise its ubiquity is not to fear it, but to understand it—and perhaps, to harness it with wisdom, humility, and responsibility.

Report of Activities
2024-2025

The Managing Committee of Indian Sociological Society in its meeting held on 9th March, 2024 approved the Adhoc Research Committee on Pedagogy, Teaching and Learning.Recognizing the need for a space that would enable a meaningful discussion of the practice of sociology in the classrooms, the Research Committee soon after its formation, initiated an online lecture series on 'Teaching and learning practices within the classroom'. This series aims at foregrounding the classroom as an important site of the teaching, learning process. Classrooms are where we belong, practice our craft and do our sociologies.

Exploring a Pedagogic purpose: Sociological Reflections'

The first lecture in the series was delivered by Dr Gita Chadha, Professor of sociology at Azim Premji University, Bangalore on 30th May,2024. Chaired by Prof. Anurekha Chari Wagh, from the Department of Sociology, University of Hyderabad, the session also had Dr Rituparna Patgiri, Assistant Professor of Sociology, IIT Guwahati as the discussant. Dr Chadha in her talk titled 'Exploring a Pedagogic purpose: Sociological Reflections' brought several important themes into her lecture discussion. Drawing from her experiences of having taught in different classrooms such as gender studies classroom and feminist science studies classroom, Dr Chadha raised some pertinent questions on what pedagogy, teaching and learning essentially entail. Reflecting on the two core components of interdisciplinarity and intersectionality, she elaborated on how interdisciplinarity brings critical insights and how the classroom in a State Public University is the best site to understand the notion of intersectionality.
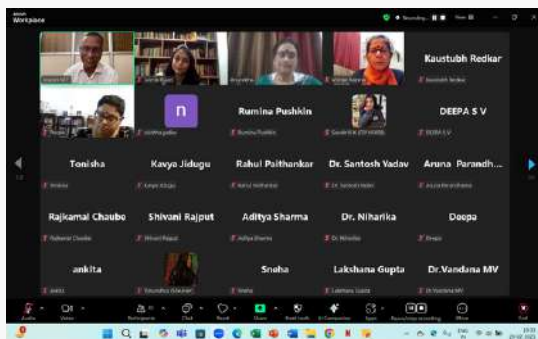
Sociological (Re) Imagination: Practices in a Sociology Classroom'

The second lecture in the series was delivered by Dr Rukmini Sen, Professor at Dr B R Ambedkar University, New Delhi. The session was chaired by Dr Gita Chadha and Dr Bindulakshmi P, Social Anthropologist joined as a discussant. Titled sociological (Re) Imagination: Practices in a Sociology Classroom' the talk by Dr Rukmini Sen reflected on the pedagogic practices of teaching sociology in a Public University in Delhi and how the discipline embraces interdisciplinarity.

Autoethnography as a Feminist Pedagogical Tool

On 20th February Prof. Anurekha ChariWagh from the Dept. of Sociology, University of Hyderabad delivered a talk on 'Autoethnography as a feminist pedagogical tool'. The session was chaired by Dr Joseph MT from the Dept of Sociology, University of Mumbai. We had nearly 60 participants leading to rich discussions following the insightful presentation. Extensive scholarship emphasizes the use of autoethnography as a powerful methodological approach, organized around active and self-reflexive practices that engage with the researcher's own vulnerability.

By doing so it empowers not only the self but also the discipline and its practitioners who do not hesitate to address either vulnerability and/or power. While such a methodological approach thus establishes 'self' as epistemologically significant in research; this session sought to explore its potential as a feminist pedagogical tool.
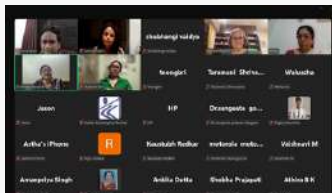
Collaborative Sessions

Family Studies Today: Reflections on Pedagogy

As part of our attempts to collaborate with Research Committees, a panel discussion was held on 30th May on 'Family Studies Today: Reflections on Pedagogy' in collaboration with the Research Committee 2 on Studies on Family, Marriage, and Kinship. The panel comprised Dr Nilika Mehrotra, Dr Kamla Ganesh and Dr Tiplut Nongbri. The session was moderated by Dr Rukmini Sen. The session provided a wonderful trajectory of family and kinship studies along with enriching discussions on new pedagogies of doing family studies today.

We also collaborated with RC 15 on Agrarian and Rural Studies for a Students' Panel on 'Studying the Rural: Pedagogical Reflections and Learning from The Weekly Rural Newsletter'. The panel comprised students from Flame University Pune, along with their Professor Shamsher Singh. Prof. Rukmini Sen from Dr B R Ambedkar University, New Delhi chaired the session. In a context where the rural and agrarian seem to be disappearing from our curriculum and course content, it was an absolute pleasure to hear the students reflect on and speak about the significant takeaways from this unique exercise of mapping the rural every week based on media reports.
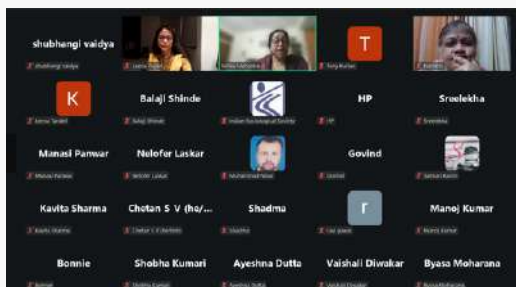
Teaching, Reading and Writing in the age of AI

A session on Teaching, Reading and Writing Sociology in the age of AI was held on 11th October in collaboration with AI and Society Research Lab, Gitam University. Dr Rakesh Krishnan from Gitam University chaired the session and the panelists included Dr Suraj Beri from Nagaland University, Dr Sambit Mallick from IIT Guwahati, Dr Roma Bhattacharya from Gitam University and Dr Debapriya Ganguly from Savitribai Phule University, Pune. The session witnessed scintillating discussions around a theme that has generated a lot of interest as well as apprehension, anxieties and fears about invisible algorithms, the interplay between AI and social structures and the question of agency. In this context the panelists raised critical questions about access, design, location of AI generated data and sources of origin, the seemingly infallible nature of content in AI and what if AI is wrong? What could be the possible ramifications for research and the researcher?

Book discussion on 'Reflexivity, Relatedness and Interpretations: The Curved Trajectory of Research'

On 24th May a book discussion on the book 'Reflexivity, Relatedness and Interpretations: The Curved Trajectory of Research' was organized. Co-authored by Dr Roopa Rathnam, Dr. Roma Bhattacharya, and Dr Vasudha Katju, the discussion focused on lesser known or rarely discussed aspects of 'doing research' and its dilemmas, contradictions, and antinomies. The session was moderated by Dr Amman Madan.

Disability affirming pedagogies in higher education

A session on Disability affirming pedagogies in higher education was organized on 19th September, 2025. Chaired by Nilika Mehrotra from JNU, the session had Prof Shubhangi Vaidya from Delhi University, Nandini Ghosh from Institute of Development Studies and Tony Kurian from Azim Premji University as Panelists. Conversations about marginalization in education often focus on caste, class, gender, or sexuality—but a discussion on disability remains largely in the background. Standardized institutional practices of teaching and learning and assessment assume a one-size-fits-all learner—usually imagined as a cis-het able-bodied, neurotypical student. This session engaged with disability-affirming pedagogies—approaches that center access, flexibility, and care in teaching and learning for all constituencies on campus. From a discussion on disability perspectives in teaching courses on Kinship and Family Life, Anthropological Theories and Gender studies at M.A. and M.Phil/ PhD level and legal provisions for the disabled including the actual implementation of the ocular-centric nature of ethnographic practices and the ways in which this could be altered.

Senseing a shift: the audio-visual turn in pedagogical practices in Sociology

Dr Rituparna Patgiri from the department of Humanities and Social Sciences, IIT Guwahati spoke on a very pertinent theme on 'Senseing a shift: the audio-visual turn in Sociology on the 19th of November. She established the context of the emergence of Doing Sociology- an academic blog dedicated to promoting sociological consciousness among young students and scholars and explained the need for meaningful pedagogical tools such as blogs and podcasts in the times we live in.

Workshop on Doing Academic Writing Differently

An ISS sponsored workshop on 'Doing Academic Writing Differently' was organized on 27th and 28th November by the departments of Sociology of University of Mumbai and HSNC University, Mumbai in collaboration with Research Committees 6 on Sociology of Religion and Research Committee 11 on Sociology of Environment. Spread over two days the workshop saw insightful presentations by a diverse set of scholars on varied aspects of Academic Writing.

ADDITIONAL READING

RIPIKA SINGH

STUDENT, AJEENKYA DY PATIL UNIVERSITY

"FROM REFORM TO REBELLION: HOW BIHAR'S LIQUOR BAN AFFECTS YOUTH AND SOCIETY"

ABSTRACT

The liquor ban in Bihar, enforced through the Bihar Prohibition and Excise Act, 2016, by the Chief Minister Nitish Kumar. It was introduced as a landmark social reform with the aim of curbing alcoholism, reducing domestic violence, and promoting public welfare. However, nearly a decade later, the outcomes of this policy reveal a striking contrast between intention and reality. While the ban initially received widespread support, its implementation has led to unintended consequences that deeply affect both society and the youth. Instead of eradicating alcohol consumption, prohibition has fuelled an underground economy of bootlegging, smuggling, and corruption, eroding the legitimacy of law enforcement and governance. The youth, who were expected to benefit most from a healthier environment, have ironically emerged as the greatest casualties of this experiment. Many have been drawn into illegal liquor trade, addiction to unsafe spurious liquor, and cycles of crime that threaten their future prospects. The resulting social disruptions—ranging from economic losses and judicial burden to public health crises—highlight the gap between the idealistic vision of prohibition and its ground realities. This paper critically examines the trajectory "from reform to rebellion," analysing how Bihar's liquor ban has simultaneously reshaped society and jeopardized the potential of its younger generation.

KEYWORDS

Bihar liquor Ban, Alcohol prohibition, Youth vulnerability, Corruption in enforcement, Illicit alcohol trade, Excise Act

1. INTRODUCTION

On 26 November 2015, Bihar Chief Minister Nitish Kumar announced that alcohol would be banned in the state from 1 April 2016. Nitish Kumar officially declared the total ban on 5 April 2016, and said in a press conference, "All type of liquor will be banned in the state from today. Sale [and consumption] of any type of alcohol in hotels, bars, clubs, and any other place will be illegal from today onwards.

In April 2016, the state of Bihar implemented a blanket ban on the manufacture, transport, sale, and consumption of alcohol. The policy was introduced as a means to restore social order, reduce domestic violence, improve public health, and minimise alcohol-induced crimes. Politicians and activists lauded it as a bold move toward societal improvement. However, a closer examination reveals that the prohibition has not only failed to achieve its intended goals but has also led to numerous unforeseen social and economic repercussions. In India, liquor laws are primarily under state jurisdiction, leading to different policies across the country.

Several states have implemented either complete or partial prohibition due to sociopolitical, cultural, and health-related considerations, yet few have succeeded in enforcing it effectively. Gujarat, the longest-standing dry state, has maintained prohibition since 1960, but has struggled with black market liquor trade. Nagaland and Mizoram have also attempted strict bans, but illicit liquor sales continue to thrive. Other states, such as Kerala and Andhra Pradesh, initially imposed prohibitions only to later revise or lift them due to economic pressures and practical enforcement challenges. The main contention is that the Gujarat and Mizoram manage prohibition despite the shadows of black trade, still they have sustained prohibition through cultural acceptance, strict governance, and alternative opportunities, but In Bihar the liquor ban has taken a far worse turn. Instead of reducing consumption, it has increased illegal trade, empowered the liquor mafia, and pushed many youths into crime and addiction. What was meant to be a reformative step has now become a source of corruption, social unrest, and destruction of the younger generation." Bihar's liquor ban has spiralled into a breeding ground for corruption, illegal trade, and youth vulnerability—transforming a noble intention into a social crisis.

The liquor ban in Bihar, imposed in 2016 under the Bihar Prohibition and Excise Act, 2016 which states that "no person shall manufacture, bottle, distribute, transport, collect, store, possess, purchase, sell or consume any intoxicant or liquor". Initially, the ban was partial, targeting country-made liquor, but it was soon extended to cover all types of alcohol,
 including foreign-made liquor, across the state. The section 37 of Bihar Prohibition and Excise Act 2016 deals with the consumption of alcohol, section 30 of the Act deals with liquor used for other purposes such as sale, storage, manufacture, and transportation.

The Article 47 of the directive principles of state policy (DPSP) in the Indian Constitution state that "The State shall endeavour to bring about prohibition of the consumption except for medicinal purposes of intoxicating drinks and of drugs which are injurious to health". The Directive Principles are not-justiciable rights of the people but fundamental in the governance of the country. It shall be the duty of the State to apply these principles in making policy laws per Article 47. As Per Article 38, state, and union governments, as duty, shall make further detailed policies and laws for implementation considering DPSPs as fundamental policy. Considering this directive principles the states like Bihar, Gujarat, Mizoram, Nagaland had legislated laws restricting the liquor ban in their state under the Excise Acts of their respective states.

This prohibition in Bihar was envisioned as a progressive reform aimed at curbing alcohol abuse, reducing domestic violence, and promoting social order. While the policy was introduced with noble intentions, its practical outcomes have painted a far more complex picture. Instead of eradicating alcohol consumption, prohibition has driven the trade underground, giving rise to illegal liquor networks, corruption, and new forms of social unrest. The youth, in particular, have become the most vulnerable victims of this paradoxical reform.

Far from protecting them from the dangers of alcohol, the ban has inadvertently pushedmanyyoung individuals toward unlawful activities, easy money through bootlegging, and a cultureof secrecy and rebellion. This not only undermines their education and career prospects but also erodes the social fabric of Bihar.

Thus, what began as a reformative step has gradually transformed into a source of rebellion, leaving behind questions about whether prohibition has truly served its purpose or instead spoiled the future of the younger generation while straining society at large.

This Article will focus on implementation of this ban in Bihar, the purpose behind the ban and analyse whether this ban had fulfilled its objective or had made the state even worse. This will target on the effect of the prohibition on the society, the economic effect, public health. Secondly it targets the Youths involvement and their future, the political stand of oppositions is also included. It also consists of the type of methodology and data collection used in this research paper.

2. OBJECTIVES

The primary objective of this research is to critically evaluate the impact of Bihar's liquor ban on society with special emphasis on the youth, who represent the most vulnerable and dynamic section of the population. While the policy was introduced with the intention of fostering social reform, the study aims to explore whether its outcomes have aligned with its stated goals or diverged into unintended consequences.

- To understand why the liquor ban was introduced in Bihar and what it aimed to achieve.
- To study how the liquor ban has affected society in daily life, with reference to crimes, corruptions and also health security. Additionally explore the reasons why the people and the law implementors are using this ban as an opportunity to make money.
- To explore how the ban has influenced the youth, including their education, career opportunities, and involvement in illegal activities.
- To find out the differences between the goals of prohibition and the actual situation on the ground.
- To suggest possible solutions or better policies that can help control alcohol misuse without harming the future of the youth.

3. HYPOTHESIS

This research is guided by the hypothesis that Bihar's liquor ban, implemented under theBihar Prohibition and Excise Act, 2016, has failed to achieve its reformative goals and has, instead, generated adverse social outcomes, particularly for the youth. Although the ban was
 envisioned as a progressive step to reduce alcoholism, domestic violence, and social decay, its unintended consequences appear to outweigh its benefits.

It is hypothesized that the prohibition has created conditions that expose the youth to greater risks rather than safeguarding their future. Instead of being protected from alcohol-related harm, many young people have become entangled in illegal liquor trade, smuggling networks, and unsafe drinking practices. This not only spoils their health but also diverts them from education, employment, and constructive social participation. The involvement of youth in such unlawful activities suggests a shift from reform to rebellion, where prohibition fosters defiance rather than discipline.

Therefore, the central hypothesis is that while the liquor ban may have reduced visible alcohol consumption, it has simultaneously undermined the prospects of Bihar's younger generation. By driving them toward crime, addiction, and rebellion, the ban questions the viability of prohibition as an effective tool for social reform.

4. METHODOLOGY AND RESEARCH METHOD

This study adopts a mixed research method, combining both qualitative and quantitative methods. The qualitative aspect focuses on understanding the social and cultural implications of prohibition, while the quantitative aspect relies on statistical data and numerical analysis to evaluate crime rates, youth involvement, and economic losses. Together, this design ensures a comprehensive view of how the liquor ban has impacted Bihar's society and youth.

For the Sources of Data there was both primary and secondary source of data was used.

The Primary Sources was used in Data collected through informal interviews, and questionnaires targeting affected families, youth, and local communities. These sources provide firsthand insights into the lived experiences of people under prohibition. Then the Secondary Sources was collected through Government reports, census and crime statistics, judicial pronouncements, policy documents, academic research papers, books, and credible media reports. These help in analysing larger trends and comparing Bihar's prohibition with other contexts.

5. DATA COLLECTION

The sources of data used is secondary data which is collected from government reports, NCRB statistics, statistics released by the Excise and Police records, and court judgments, politician's stance on hooch tragedy and press releases from law enforcement authorities such as ADG's statements on arrests, convictions and property seizures are also key sources. It also includes the primary source of data collection which is collected from the group of individuals of 26 years to 16 years of age. Who shared their exercise of the illicit liquor trade and provided with the ground reality of the liquor ban in Bihar. Through this source we also got to know that the authority is also involved in this business and taking their shares without any hesitation.

The data regarding the cases and conviction due to consumption of liquor and trade of illicit liquor was collected from the time span from April 1, 2016 the beginning of prohibition to July 2025, covering nearly decades of enforcement. The data covers 2016–2025, focusing on prohibition-related cases and convictions.

Type of Data used is Quantitative data: Large-scale statistics, including 10,85,951 prohibition-related cases, 6.40 lakh convictions, and annual arrest trends (e.g., 63,442 arrests in 2025 alone), the death rates and the numbers of person hospitalized due to hooch tragedy. Also used Qualitative data: Case studies of youth involved in bootlegging, community impacts, and narratives reported by local media and NGOs. The opposition parties stance on liquor ban and most importantly Prashant Kishore's statement regarding this was also collected.

The Sampling used here in this research paper is Snowball sampling as in the case study there was questions put up to a person of 26 years old regarding the liquor ban but he provided us information about 5 more of his friends, where each had different information to give. Through Ajay (name changed in this paper) also gave us information about the other age group children who were around 15 to 16 years old.

They also provided information with different perspective. Thereby the data was collected for two different age group involved in the illicit trade and more than 7 people's perspective and on ground reality regarding the ban was collected.

The Random sampling used in Hooch Tragedy data collection.

The other method used was Cluster sampling as not every district of Bihar was completely involved but few regions like Patna, Gopalganj and Begusarai's data was collected.

The targeted groups include: - The primary target group is Bihar's society, which included the effect on them due to this ban. The next target with special reference was the youth, as they are disproportionately affected—either criminalized for consumption or drawn into illicit liquor trade. Marginalized families are also studied, as they bear financial and social costs of arrests and loss of livelihoods. The next target were the families affected due to hooch tragedy was also used in for data collection.

This mixed dataset provides both scale (quantitative evidence of enforcement) and context (qualitative evidence of corruption and youth vulnerability). By combining official statistics with lived experiences, the data collection ensures a balanced understanding of prohibition's enforcement and impact.

6. ANALYSIS

Genesis and Objectives of Bihar's Liquor Ban

On 26 November 2015, Bihar Chief Minister Nitish Kumar issued a statement that alcohol would be banned in the state from 1 April 2016. He officially declared the total ban on 5 April 2016. Under The Bihar Prohibition and Excise Act, 2016 The new prohibition law has a jail term up to seven years and a fine of Rs.1 lakh to Rs.10 lakh for the consumption of alcohol.

In addition, the new law has the provision for capital retribution for those who engaged in manufacturing or trading of outlawed liquor if its consumption leads to casualty. Prohibition was a fulfilment of the ballot pledge made by Nitish Kumar ahead of the 2015 Assembly elections. Bihar had also tried to apply prohibition when Karpoori Thakur was the Chief Minister in 1977-78, but failed.

On 30 September 2016, Patna High Court ruled that the ban is "illegal, impractical and unconstitutional". Although even before the High Court order came, the Bihar government had stated that it would apply a new stricter law from 2 October 2016, only to stay adamant on it after the order. The Government of Bihar introduced a new interpretation of BiharProhibition and Excise Act on 2 October 2016, days after the Patna High Court quashed the former bill, deeming it as "illegal".

The act brought in stricter measures, with all Sections in the act being non-bailable and the police being allowed to assume that manufacturing of alcohol was on-going if utensils containing a blend of jaggery or grapes are found. Under the law, only special courts constituted under Bihar Special Courts Act can try the cases. It also empowered authorities to expropriate properties upon whose establishments liquor is either consumed or stored. The new policy was challenged in Patna High Court a day later. Supreme Court of India meanwhile stayed Patna High Court's order on quashing Bihar's ban on alcohol. It stayed proceedings of all challenges to Bihar's new law in the Patna High Court on 2 January 2017, stating that it will itself hear all cases related to the new ban.

Bihar became the fourth state after Gujarat, Nagaland, and Mizoram states to put a mask ban on liquor. The Chief Minister of Bihar, Nitish Kumar described the decision of his government as significant. He said, "The government will lose more than Rs.4,000 crore of profit annually but it is not a profit-driven decision as people will now use the amount invested in liquor to add nutrition to their plates, avoid illness and economic ruin that equates to all profit concerns."

The Bihar prohibition and excise Act, 2016 prohibits the manufacture, storage, distribution, transportation, possession, sale, purchase and consumption of any intoxicant or liquor, unless so allowed in terms of the Act stated under Section 13 of the Act. In addition to the penalty imposed for committing such an offence, Section 56 of the Act lays down the procedure for confiscation of "things" used for in the commission of such an offence.

Further, under section 58 power to issue an order of confiscation vests with the District Collector/Authorized officer, who upon receipt of the report of the seizing officer detaining such property ("things") is required to pass an order.

Societal and Public Health Implications of Prohibition

The liquor ban in Bihar, introduced with the intention of promoting social reform and safeguarding public health, has produced a complex set of consequences. On one hand, prohibition has been welcomed by many women's groups, as reduced access to alcohol has reportedly led to a decline in domestic violence, financial strain, and alcohol-related family disputes. Some households have experienced greater economic stability, with money being redirected from alcohol consumption to essential needs such as food, education, and healthcare. However, the societal fabric has also been strained by unintended outcomes. The ban has created a thriving underground economy, where smuggling, corruption, and illicit trade have flourished. This black market has particularly endangered marginalized communities, as they are more likely to be caught in the cycle of illegal activity. Trust between citizens and law enforcement has eroded, given the perception of selective enforcement and corruption in handling prohibition cases.

From a public health perspective, while the ban aimed to reduce alcohol is and associated diseases, it has also led to the rise of spurious liquor consumption, often resulting in mass casualties. Instead of eliminating the problem, prohibition has shifted it, leaving society torn between improved family welfare and dangerous underground practices. From a socioeconomic perspective, the policy has exacerbated rather than resolved many of the issues it sought to address, distorting markets and fostering unlawful activities.

Impact on Society

The primary rationale behind the liquor ban was its potential to curb domestic violence and alcohol-induced crimes. Various studies confirm that alcohol consumption impairs rational thinking, often acting as a trigger for violent behaviour. Given Bihar's high levels of poverty and inequality, domestic violence remains a pressing issue, and alcohol was seen as a major contributing factor. This decision was considered as a changing stance in reducing crime rates and will contribute in the societal welfare. It was welcomed by the women and children as they thought it would bring peace in the society and will help in the development of the Bihar, whether it be the reduction of crime rates, women safety, youth future which was under stake due to depressing site in their family which a drunk person use to create.

However, when the law got enforced, it turned out to be something else. People used this ban as blessing in disguise. Irrespective of the ban liquor was delivered at doorstep and was easily available. it was illegally traded by every possible person either individually or in group. This trade included the law implementors As well. Initially women were tensed about the domestic violence against them but now they are tensed about their husband who is in this trade who can be caught anytime just for money and also their children who left studies and joined this business as the legal job would not give as much as salary as they gain from this trade.

The main concern was to reduce the domestic violence against women and other crimes that were done been drunk. But the question that arise is the availability of liquor is difficult inIndia or is not not accessible? the very depressing stance is No, it is accessible and traded easily, surprisingly involving the police and the other the law protectors.

The Economic principles dictate that banning a product does not eliminate its demand; rather, it drives it underground. When anything gets illegal, it is illegally sold, the seller gets higher price for it. Now imagine the one who had the duty to prevent this crime gets involved in this act and get their part of commission from the one they arrest. This is where the real destruction arises when law protectors tend to break law.

It is the fact that Bihar has very less employment and people of Bihar had started using the liquor ban as blessing in disguise. They sell liquor illegally and get paid higher amount. The black market has distorted the alcohol trade by creating inefficiencies. Consumers now pay significantly higher prices for illicit liquor, which is often of dubious quality. According to data from the police headquarters (PHQ), 39.63 lakh litters of Indian-made foreign liquor(IMFL) and country-made liquor were seized in Bihar in 2023 alone—an average of 10,858 litre per day. These figures highlight the extent to which illicit trade has flourished under prohibition. If get caught, then they tend to give their share to the police and if they don't have much to give, gets arrested and later after being in jail they apply for bail which they easily get after a period.

When looked upon the matters the people who are rich or at position are getting huge benefit that is why they are not concerned that whether this prohibition is implemented in correct way or is it fulfilling the objectives for which it was brought? They are enjoying their power and the corruption from a socio-economic perspective, the policy has exacerbated rather than resolved many of the issues it sought to address, distorting markets and fostering unlawful activities.

While alcohol can incite violent behaviour, it is not the sole cause. According to the National Family Health Survey (NFHS), the percentage of women who reported experiencing physical or sexual violence in Bihar increased from 39% in 2015-16 to 39.6% in 2019-20. The Bihar Economic Survey also notes that cases related to crimes against women have risen over the years, although officials often attribute this to increased awareness and improved reporting mechanisms through initiatives like the Sakhi Centre. Domestic violence is a complex issue rooted in behavioural patterns, gender inequality, poverty, and a lack of social support systems. The liquor ban oversimplifies the issue by focusing exclusively on alcohol as the primary cause.

Impact on Public health

Another major justification for the liquor ban was its purported benefits for public health. Advocates argued that alcohol consumption was responsible for numerous health problems, including liver disease, addiction, and accidents. According to National Sample Survey Organisation (NSSO) data from 2011-12, Bihar ranked sixth in alcohol consumption nation wide, and its adverse health effects were evident.

However, studies indicate that outright prohibition does not reduce alcohol consumption; instead, it drives the trade underground, making it unregulated and even more dangerous.

This has been the case in Bihar, where the ban has fuelled a thriving black market for illicit alcohol, often leading to fatal alcohol poisoning. According to National Crime Records Bureau (NCRB) data, more than 500 people have died from consuming toxic alcohol since 2016. These alarming statistics underscore the policy's failure to safeguard public health.

The Hooch Tragedy

A prohibition on country-made liquor was imposed in Bihar by the Nitish Kumar led state government on 1 April 2016. On the night of 15 August 2016, some people in Khajur Vani locality in Gopalganj town consumed country-made liquor (hooch) and began suffering from stomach pain and vomiting. After being rushed to hospital for treatment, five people died by late evening and overnight eight more deaths took place, raising the death toll to 13. Three people are said to have lost their vision.

Locals and family members claimed the deaths took place after these people consumed spurious liquor. However, the administration denied the deaths took place due to consuming spurious liquor with police claiming food poisoning as the cause of death.

—Mahesh Mahto, brother of one of the victims, Shashikant Mahto.

My brother was a habitual drinker. People were in a festive mood on Independence Day, and went to drink at a place that serves illicit liquor. On Tuesday morning, they started complaining of stomach ache and nausea.

In response the Janata Dal (United) spokesperson Neeraj Kumar denied the Gopalganj incident was a hooch tragedy, saying, "Till medical reports and FSL reports prove that liquor was found in the body or blood, we cannot say it's a hooch tragedy".

BJP legislature party leader and former deputy chief minister of Bihar, Sushil Kumar Modi said "Overall, 30 people, including the 13 in Gopalganj, have died due to consumption of spurious liquor. But the administration fudges the report, blaming the deaths on contaminated food. Only Mahadalits and the poor are suffering due to Nitish's Taliban-like ban on liquor."

Mangal Pandey, Bihar BJP president, called the tragedy a failure of Nitish Kumar and wondered how despite a prohibition law in place, illegal country-made liquor was being manufactured and consumed by people. He accused the administration of covering up the case and trying to prepare fake medical reports to show that deaths were not due to liquor consumption. Another senior BJP leader Nand Kishore Yadav said, "This government has completely failed in curbing the consumption of liquor, despite imposing tough laws. The incident proves that law is just a tool to harass innocents, while others are simply defying the law. The chief minister must take moral responsibility."

The other tragedy occurred on 14 December 2022, an alcohol poisoning took place in Bihar, India. The poisoning resulted in the death of 73 people. The victims consumed hooch (spurious liquor), that is qualitatively different from the standard alcoholic products. It is the highest death toll in Bihar, since liquor prohibition in the state in 2016. According to police, relatives of those who were killed claimed that the victims died due to the consumption of poisonous liquor in the Doila and Yadu Mot villages of the Saran district. The victims started vomiting after consuming the alcohol with people dying on the way to hospital. Many others died while being treated in hospital later. The tragedy took the lives of 73 people in total. Most of the victims were declared dead on arrival at a hospital in Chhapra. Many of the victims did not seek help initially because they feared being punished for their violation of the liquor prohibition. In response the Chief Minister Nitish Kumar said that those who drink alcohol will die and no compensation will be given to the families of the deceased. Pointing out that Bihar is a state where alcohol prohibition has been in place since 2016, the Chief Minister asked people to be more cautious in this regard. The opposition, including the Bhartiya Janata Party, protested against Nitish Kumar's stand in the assembly. Nitish Kumar declined to repeal the liquor ban, citing women's rights concerns.

Even at this high health risk the government is not considered to keep a check or make new policy or take some steps to avoid this even after knowing the consequences there was no measures taken. The ban was made to protect the health of the people who use to drink but what changed? Even now after ban the government can't prohibit the sale on ground. This spurious liquor is taking lives of many making no difference.

The liquor ban was introduced as a means to curb domestic violence and restore social order, but it has instead become a textbook example of a policy that fails to achieve its intended outcomes. While the objectives of improving public health, reducing crime, and fostering social harmony are commendable, the approach taken by Bihar's government is fundamentally flawed. The ban has fuelled the growth of the black market, overburdened law enforcement, and resulted in substantial revenue losses.

Addressing domestic violence and alcohol-related harm requires more comprehensive strategies, such as improving access to education, reducing poverty, and promoting gender equality—measures that tackle the root causes rather than imposing blanket bans. Global experiences indicate that alcohol prohibitions are doomed to fail. Instead, targeted regulation, public health education, and social interventions would be more effective.

A well-structured policy that encourages responsible consumption while generating revenue for public services would yield far better results than Bihar's ill-conceived liquor ban. The state's experience serves as a cautionary tale about the risks of implementing populist policies without fully considering their economic and social ramifications.

Youth at the Crossroads: Consequences of the Ban on the Younger Generation
Bihar's younger generation already faces steep educational and socio-economic hurdles. According to the Ministry of Education, Bihar has the lowest literacy rate among Indian states at 61.8%, compared to a national average closer to 80-85%. Disaggregated by gender, male literacy stands around 71.2%, while female literacy lags far behind at 51.5%.
Dropping out of school is another big issue: Bihar has the highest secondary-level (Classes IX–XII) dropout rate in the country, at 20.86% as of 2023-24.

This means that more than one in five students do not make it from early secondary school through to the end.

At the same time, labour force participation and youth unemployment figures indicate constrained opportunities. Bihar's labour force participation rate is about 43.4%, markedly below the national level of ~56%. Female participation is especially low. Youth unemployment (15-29 years) in urban Bihar is ~10.8%, higher than many adult unemployment rates. Without strong formal employment opportunities, many youths are vulnerable to informal, potentially exploitative or illegal activities.

When the liquor ban is layered upon these existing vulnerabilities, the risk is that educational engagement drops further. Youth from marginalized or impoverished communities—already weak in literacy—may get drawn into bootlegging or liquor smuggling, seeing it as a source of income. Higher dropout rates may follow, as schooling becomes less attractive relative to illicit economic opportunity. With ~20+% of secondary-school students already dropping out, even a small increase due to economic pressure or law-avoidance by youth could significantly worsen human capital outcomes.

Thus, while the ban aims for social reform, without addressing education access, school retention, gender disparity, and employability, there is a real danger it could exacerbate Bihar's educational crisis and further hinder literacy improvements.

CASE STUDY
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Vinod (name changed), 26, a political science graduate, resident of Begusarai, Bihar say she has been on a job hunt since 2013. "There is lack of vacancies in the government sector and not enough opportunities in the private sector either," he says. Five of his friends no disagreement. "After Nitish Kumar banned alcohol, a man who earlier ran a licensed liquor shop asked me to join him. I initially worked for him as he sold alcohol illegally. Shortly, I became a distributor myself. That is the journey for everybody sitting here," he adds. In a month, Ajit makes more than Rs 50,000. "If I had landed a government job, my starting salary would have been around Rs 20,000," he says. Joining the conversation, Nitin (name changed), who was initially reticent to engage, sheepishly says Ajit has just built a one-storeyed house.

When asked about the police he said that "They themselves buy from us," says Ajit, bursting into laughter that soon turns into coughing. "Doctors and policemen are our most prolific customers. Police get their hafta." Immediately after the liquor ban, Nitin says, the network of bootleggers was extremely careful. "We dealt in code words," he says, adding, "And a new customer had to come through an old one." Even if the police arrests anyone they take money for security purpose in jail and to get easy bail after a small period in the jail.

They added that my younger brother (Ajay) who is of 16 years dropped his school and helps me in this trade along with him all his friend think that this method will give them more money than studying. Even their parents support them as if they go to school or study, they will have to invest in them. So, they think it's better they do this business and get money for better living. These children who work Belong to a low-income family where the father works irregularly as a daily wage labourers and the mother as a domestic help, was compelled to seek income at an early age. The state-wide liquor prohibition, introduced to reduce alcohol consumption, ironically created a thriving underground economy that lured vulnerable youth like him.

Ajay and his friends were primarily involved in transporting liquor on a bicycle, acting as a middleman between brewers and customers, and assisting in hiding consignments during raids. The quick but illegal earnings of ₹300–500 a day made him financially useful to his family, but also exposed him to repeated risks—police harassment, community stigma, and disrupted education. Their act was also influencing the other children who thought that this instant trick to earn money can never be earned while doing any kind of job. They also had a perspective that as they were minor, they would not be convicted easily nor will be checked by any authority while transporting. thereby the liquor mafias who are well settled and wanted their domination on other heired these children to get into this business. One of the friends of Vinod stated that the liquor mafia who has political connection transfer funds to them during election and in return the politicians direct the police man and other executive authorities to not create hindrance in their business.

SOCIAL MOBILITY

The Educational Pathway Blocked: Ajay's school dropout limited his access to upward mobility through education. Instead of skill acquisition, he entered a cycle of informal and illegal work.

Economic Status: While his earnings temporarily improved the family's financial situation, they did not create sustainable economic growth. The lack of savings and dependence on illegal income reinforced poverty.

Social Standing: Within peer groups, involvement in liquor trade provided short-term status and acceptance. However, at the community level, his family faced stigma and suspicion from neighbours and local authorities.

Exposure to Criminal Networks: Early entry into organized crime structures reduced his chances of transitioning into legitimate livelihoods. It also normalized risky behaviour among his peers, shaping a generation with limited lawful opportunities.

Even then graduate persons are into this business as they don't have any source of employment. At initial phase they got a decent amount which triggered them to earn more through the same mode which became their only source of income. Through this trade they built a new house, bikes etc which definitely gave them the pleasure and in this way their talent and potential got waisted and they can never go back now.

OUTCOME

The outcome of Vinod and his younger brother along with their friend's involvement in the illicit liquor trade reflects a mix of temporary financial relief and long - term disadvantages. While his earnings helped the family meet immediate survival needs, the dependence on illegal income disrupted his education and exposed him to police action and community stigma. His early entanglement with criminal networks has limited opportunities for legal employment, creating a cycle of risk and insecurity. The psychological stress of fear, raids, and harassment has further shaped his worldview, making crime appear as a normal livelihood path. For the family, the short-term gains have come at the cost of heightened anxiety and diminished social standing, while at the community level, cases like XYZ's reinforce the normalization of youth in unlawful activities. They might get wealth and every other luxury but it might get vanished once they get into a serious trap. They could have applied their talent and this business idea in some other legal things; a new innovation could have brought them and the state great progression but they wasted their capability in this trade where everything is temporary and of high risk.

Without intervention through rehabilitation, vocational training, and policy reforms, the trajectory of XYZ's life is likely to remain trapped within the shadow economy created by prohibition.

Implementation, Political Dimensions, and Governance Challenges

In Bihar, alcohol abuse has historically been a major source of household conflict. The ban was positioned as a solution to this problem and was particularly well-received by conservative and rural voters, especially women. By implementing prohibition, the state government aimed to consolidate its support among these demographics. However, when political considerations override economic logic, policies often fail to yield sustainable results. The government once proposed replacing liquor shops with milk parlours under the Bihar State Milk Co-operative Federation Ltd. (COMFED). Although over 6,000 liquor shops were shut down, only a few transitioned into milk parlours, as dairy sales could not match the high profit margins of alcohol sales. A more effective strategy would have involved regulating alcohol sales, increasing awareness of its risks, and investing in de-addiction programs rather than imposing an outright ban for political gains.

When the political strategist Prashant Kishor launched his Jan Suraaj Party on October 2 in Patna, a key promise he made was to lift the liquor ban. Addressing a public meeting he said: "Currently, Bihar incurs a loss of Rs.20,000 crore each year due to the liquor ban. For Bihar to achieve a world-class education system, an investment of Rs.5 lakh crore is required over the next 10 years. Once the liquor ban is lifted, that money will be dedicated solely to establishing a new education system in Bihar." Ek ghante mein hata denge. (The liquor ban will be lifted within an hour once we come to power.) There is no real liquor ban in Bihar. There is a law in place that has shut down liquor shops and started home delivery," Kishor said in an interview with Live Hindustan. It is also assumed that those who claim liquor prohibition in Bihar is beneficial, particularly in empowering women and reducing violence, should be questioned, especially members of the BJP and Congress, on why such a ban has not been implemented nationwide. However, this can be countered by stating the fact that liquor is banned in other states of India as well such as Gujarat, Mizoram, Nagaland, and Union territory which include Lakshadweep. But still the Ban in Bihar is critised because similar to other states and Union Territory, the policy was introduced as a means to restore social order, reduce domestic violence, improve public health, and minimise alcohol-induced crimes. However rather than prevention it ended up with raised cases of corruption, crimes of domestic violence and illegal trade of liquor has increased cases under Excise Act.

The court noted that the police as well as officials of the excise, tax, and transport departments were colluding with bootleggers and pointed out that the poor were becoming both victims of hooch tragedies and offenders under the law for consumption of liquor. The main issue that arises is that the implementors do not do their duty properly and let the crime happen just for the quick earning of money and increase corruption. The one who is poor are convicted and the rest who can afford get the freedom to trade easily with time-to-time commission to the police in charge. The government had not taken steps to resolve the issues it had only got worse in 9 years as it destroyed the employment, education, crime rates, pending cases in courts.

7. FINDINGS

Over 6.40 lakh people have been convicted under the Bihar Prohibition and Excise Act, 2016, since its enforcement, with courts awarding death sentences to nine offenders, life imprisonment to 18, and jail terms exceeding 10 years. ADG said that a whopping 6,38,574 individuals have been held guilty under section 37 (for consuming liquor or creating nuisance at a public place under the influence of liquor), and the remaining 1,805 have been convicted under section 30 (manufacture, sale, storage, and transportation) of the Bihar Prohibition and Excise Act 2016. A total of 10,85,951 cases has been registered under the new Prohibition and Excise Act between April 1, 2016 and July 3, 2025 across the state. Of them, 4,16,081 cases have been registered by state Excise department and 5,59,870 cases by state police. Since January this year, 63,442 individuals have been arrested on the charges of consuming liquor or being involved in the illegal trade of manufacture and sale of the banned commodity. Of them, 38,781 have been arrested for consuming alcohol while 24,701 have been booked for being involved in bootlegging and other illegal activities. A total of 13,921 people from other states have been arrested in Bihar between April 1, 2016 and June 2025. A list of 305 individuals from other states, wanted in Prohibition related cases in Bihar, has been sent to the states concerned for their arrest.

Altogether 240 individuals have been identified who have amassed property through illegal trade of liquor in the state. Proposals to confiscate property of 76 people have already been submitted to the respective courts. "The process of confiscating property of these accused will start once the court's permission is obtained by police." Overall, the findings suggest that prohibition in Bihar has struggled to achieve its intended goals. Instead, it has fuelled corruption, fostered illicit trade, and placed youth and marginalized communities at greater risk—underscoring the gap between policy intent and ground reality.

However, no death from spurious liquor has been reported in the state since January this year. however precaution must be taken and the surveys and reports must be considered by the government for reforms.

8. RECOMMENDATION

For Bihar's liquor ban to succeed, reforms must move beyond prohibition and focus on constructive alternatives. First, comprehensive de-addiction and counselling centres should be set up to rehabilitate those affected by alcohol dependence. Second, targeted youth incentives are essential: scholarships for students from vulnerable families, free skill development courses, and startup or self-employment grants can reduce the temptation to join illicit liquor networks. The government could also provide stipend-based vocational training and special incentives for youth who pursue higher education or technical skills. At the same time, public awareness campaigns must educate communities about the risks of spurious liquor and the benefits of healthy lifestyles. Enforcement should become stricter yet fair, with mechanisms to curb corruption among officials. Finally, improving educational infrastructure and linking prohibition with employment opportunities will ensure the younger generation becomes an active partner in building a healthier, more progressive Bihar. If this is not possible then the Ban should be removed because it is creating more challenges in the society than improvement.

Poor should not be exploited; future of youth should not be ruined as per Prashant Kishore stated that approx. 2000 crores are waisted every year then it will be better if we put this money in employment strict education to youth as it could bring development in overall sate. Can be invested in industries for women empowerment which will help them to be independent and stop abuse against them. Make domestic violence punishment harsher and stricter and the one who drunk and do mischief shall be given harsh punishment and counselling as well. Giving the children innovative ideas and ways to study if government will provide them employment, they won't get attracted to all these practices similar to developed state like Gujarat. Thus, transformation can be brought together.

9. CONCLUSION

The liquor ban in Bihar was introduced with noble intentions of curbing alcoholism, improving family well-being, and protecting society from the harmful effects of liquor. While the policy has brought some visible gains such as reduced open consumption, better household savings, and support from women who experienced less domestic violence, its unintended consequences cannot be ignored. The rise of illegal trade, consumption of spurious liquor, corruption in enforcement, and the involvement of youth in bootlegging have undermined the original objectives.

Bihar already struggles with low literacy (61.8%) and high dropout rates, and the ban has further diverted many young people from education toward unlawful activities. This creates long-term risks for the state's development. For prohibition to succeed, it must be accompanied by education, awareness, rehabilitation, and employment opportunities. Only then can the liquor ban transform from a symbolic reform into a sustainable path for Bihar's progress.

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