

Editorial

The Pride of Nalanda

The Nalanda University which was established in 8th century in India was ruined by the invaders. After long one thousand and two hundred years the university is again come up with great expectations. The Pride of Nalanda is not only deserved by the Indians but also by the whole world's community because it was enriched by the scholars of the whole world. There were three big libraries in Nalanda University namely Ratnasagar, Ratnadodhi and Ratnaranjaka. Books of various disciplines were collected by these libraries from different parts of the world. There were about five lacks of books in those libraries managed by scholar-librarians. There were great scholars for knowledge management in those libraries. The readers were facilitated with three thousand seats in the reading halls. They also copied the original books in the libraries as because there were no printing machines at that time. There were special method and technical know-how to direct and manage these libraries. The modern library and information science, knowledge management systems are developed on the basis of the know-how of then universities like Nalanda. Now we can study the library science of ancient past as ethno library science. We should study the library and information system of Nalanda University to unearth our heritage and enrich the knowledge society at present.



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Problems and Prospects of Agro-based Cottage Industries in Assam

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Abstract:

According to Gandhiji "REAL India resides in RURAL India". Cottage Industries support a large portion of the rural population of India acting as one of the major sources of its economy, and are responsible for having preserved the rich cultural heritage of India.....Not only do they help this country in maintaining a distinct identity of its own but also provide it with a unique platform to display its specialty whenever a tough competition is faced in the international markets.

A cottage is a firm house usually in rural areas. A cottage industry is small-self help industry that is carried out in the home, community centre, parish hall or some other convenient place. Such industries are evident in handicrafts, catering, tailoring, dressmaking, beauty culture, retailing of dry goods, pottery and furniture making on a small scale. Cottage industries developed mainly out of the need for an additional source of income, because of the need to use one's spare time gainfully and because of the relative ease of acquiring the raw-materials to set up such industries. Examples of cottage industries are khadi industry, handicrafts, handlooms, cane and bamboo base industries, pottery, blacksmith, etc.

Assam was traditionally famous for its cottage industry, especially spinning and weaving. Pat or pure Silk production is essentially confined to Assam. Assam produces about 10% of total natural Silk of India. Assam also produces Muga, the golden Silk. Assam is also the main producer of Eri or Endi. Weaving is an important cottage industry of Assam.

In Assam, the challenges for cottage industries are inadequate physical infrastructure, high project costs, inadequate finance and investment, inadequate skilled labour, underdeveloped market and administrative problems for outside investment.

Introduction:

The agro climate weather of Assam is ideal for the growth of a variety of food crops as well as plantation of cash crops. Tea production in Assam has high demand in the west particularly in Europe as a beverage. The abundant forest resources provide timber for industries like plywood, paper. Various kinds of fruits, vegetable as well as medical herbs available in the State are yet to be tapped for commercial purpose.

Agriculture is the main occupation of the people of Assam. Small Scale Industries based on the agricultural products plays a significant role in the economy of Assam since the early stages of development. Most of the industries are engaged in the manufacturing or processing of food products. Agro based products like paddy, ginger, chilly, orange, maize, banana, passion fruits, mustard, turmeric, sugarcane and such other crops are grown intensively throughout the entire region. Rice mill, paddy dehusking, gur making, chow making, oil mill, spice grinding, small flour mill, pickle making, chips making, banana fibre extraction unit etc. are some of the important agro-based industries under the category of food products and allied industries.

As per available report of agriculture Department, implementation of the Technology Mission for Integrated Department of Horticulture (TMIDH) in Assam has brought tremendous change in production of fruits, spices and vegetables in the State thereby opening ample scope for setting up of food processing industries in the State.



Food Processing Industry & Food Market

Table: 1.1**District-wise Agro-based Industries in Assam and their employment status**

Sl No	District	Agro-base Industries		Sl No	District	Agro-base Industries	
		Industries	Workers			Industries	Workers
1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4
1	Dhubri	10	80	15	Dhemaji	4	17
2	Kokrajhar	5	28	16	Morigaon	8	63
3	Bongaigaon	6	24	17	Nagaon	81	302
4	Chirang	0	0	18	Golaghat	9	53
5	Baksa	4	15	19	Jorhat	7	63
6	Goalpara	8	27	20	Sivasagar	11	100
7	Barpeta	6	31	21	Dibrugarh	15	124
8	Nalbari	4	33	22	Tinsukia	23	320
9	Kamrup Metro	0	0	23	Karbi-Anglong	6	55
10	Kamrup	25	368	24	Dima Hasao	3	9
11	Darrang	8	47	25	Karimganj	2	6
12	Udalguri	3	13	26	Hailakandi	4	16
13	Sonitpur	3	11	27	Cachar	4	15
14	Lakhimpur	2	14				
	Assam					261	1834

Source: Commissionerate of Industries and Commerce, Assam.

Meaning and concept of Cottage Industries:

Cottage industry is the one which is run by an individual with the help of his family members with very little capital. Most of the cottage industries do not use power. The use of power and machines in these industries are very limited. The products produced in cottage industries are usually to satisfy the local demands. Number of hired-labour in this sector is very limited and the capital investment is also small. They are mostly located in village and rural areas. A cottage industry is carried out in the home, community centre, parish hall or some other convenient place. Such industries are evident in handicrafts,

catering, tailoring, dressmaking, beauty culture, retailing of dry goods, pottery and furniture making on a small scale. Cottage industries developed mainly out of the need for an additional source of income, because of the need to use one's spare time gainfully and because of the relative ease of acquiring the raw-materials to set up such industries. Examples of cottage industries are khadi industry, handicrafts, handlooms, cane and bamboo base industries, pottery, blacksmith, etc.

Project Opportunities in Assam:

Assam was traditionally famous for its cottage industry, especially spinning and weaving. Pat or pure Silk production is essentially confined to Assam. Assam produces about 10% of total natural Silk of India. Assam also produces Muga, the golden Silk. Assam is also the main producer of Eri or Endi. Weaving is an important cottage industry of Assam. It is traditional industry which can be traced back to very ancient times. There are about 7, 00,000 looms in Assam, where majority are primitive foot looms. Only some looms of Sualkuchi, used for commercial production of Silk cloth, are powered. Bell-metal work is a Traditional cottage industry of Assam. The Products made of bell-metal and traditional plates, cups, tumblers, pitchers, bowls, sarai (a tray with a stand) dwarf pitchers, pots, hookahs and musical instruments. Brass-work is also an important traditional handicraft of Assam. Brass articles are produced not only for day-to-day use, but also for interior decoration. The total production marketable finished goods annually are about 300 tones.

Government Policies:

The Assam Preferential Stores Purchase Act, 1989 (to replace the Assam Preferential Stores Rule, 1972) enactment is aimed to encourage growth of industries in the State and to implement the Industrial Policy announced and published by the Govt. of Assam vide Notification No CL 586/85 dated 24th December, 1986. Objectives of this enactment is to encourage small scale and cottage industries by preferential purchase of their products, to rationalize procedure for purchase of stores required by the State Government, companies and undertakings, small industries, khadi and cottage industries registered under this Act shall be exempted from payment of earnest money and security deposit for items in respect of which the units are registered.

Table: 1.2

**Achievements of Khadi and Village Industries under Khadi and Village Industries
Commission in Assam**

Item	Production (Rs. in Lakh)			Sales (Rs. in Lakh)			Employment (Nos)		
	2008-09	2009-10	2010-11	2008-09	2009-10	2010-11	2008-09	2009-10	2010-11
Khadi and Poly Vastra									
Cotton	43.70	44.57	52.28	86.84	94.17	56.17	2490	3000	3000
Silk	805.59	822.03	855.27	649.34	695.26	780.12	13000	14000	14000
Woolen	—	—	—	3.91	4.25	2.22	—	—	—
Poly-vastra	24.41	28.57	28.58	18.23	26.75	27.21	105	204	—
Total	873.70	859.17	936.13	758.32	820.43	865.72	15595	17204	17000
Village Industries	41544.57	47638.46	52239.19	69452.24	696228.85	74483.06	298000	359000	377000
Grand Total	42418.27	48533.63	53175.32	70210.56	70449.28	75348.78	313595	376204	394000

Source: Khadi and Villages Industries Commission, Assam

Problems of Agro-based Cottage Industries in Assam:

(A). Inefficient manpower: Manpower plays an important role in any industry. The inefficiency of manpower in small-scale industries due to illiteracy, ignorance, lack of training facilities etc. affected the growth of small-scale industries.

(B). Lack of credit facility: Another major problem of small-scale industries is the lack of credit facilities. Commercial banks are not interested in providing finance to this sector. At present, this situation slightly has been changed but it is still far from satisfactory.

(C). Old and obsolete machineries: The small-scale industries are facing the problem in producing due to old and obsolete machineries. They are unable to compete with the products of large scale-industries.

(D). Lack of marketing facilities: The small-scale industries also facing the problem of marketing in their products. There is lack of organized marketing facilities for these industries. They have to depend on the middlemen for selling their products. In many cases the market for their products remains untapped.

(E). **Old designs:** The small-scale industries are continuing with the age-old designs. The products are unable to meet the modern demand.

(F). **Scattered plantation and uneven distribution:** The most important challenge which affects the marketing of produces in the region is the scattered plantation and uneven distribution of products which is uneconomical and inefficient. This in particular resulted in distress sale of surplus product in the local market as it could not attract big buyers from outside.

(G). **Lack of road and transport facility:** Another major challenge is the non-availability of proper transport network across the region covering urban, semi-urban and rural areas; which in particular affects the movement of produces from the region to other parts of the country. As a result, increase in transportation cost or damage of goods during transportation or both contributing low economic return. Most seasonal crops produced in one area cannot be taken to other part of the region for marketing due to lack of proper logistic support and proper transportation facilities.

(H). **Lack of good marketing agencies and other distribution channel:** Lack of appropriate agencies in this region till date, is one of the most important factor due to which the supply chain for the sale of farm based produces gets affected. Normally, private traders and middlemen pre-dominate the market and trading of agricultural produce in the region.

Prospects of Agro-based Cottage Industries in Assam:

(A). **Labour intensive:** The small-scale industries are labour intensive. They will provide more employment opportunities to the local rural communities. It will also help in solving the unemployment problems in the region.

(B). **Low capital investment:** Small-scale industries can be setup even with low capital investment as compared to large scale industries. As capital is scarce in this region, small-scale industries are the feasible option for this region.

(C). **Quick return:** In case of small-scale industries, there is less time gap between capital investment and production of goods. Thus, it brings quick return to the entrepreneur.

(D). Reduction of pressure on land: People of this region excessively depend on agriculture. The development of small scale-industries will help in diverting the excess workforce to this sector.

(E). Development of entrepreneurial skill: The development of this sector will result in change of attitude of people of this region. People will develop an entrepreneurial skill, which will help in identifying new areas of investment. This will help in the economic development of the region.

Road Map and strategy for Agro-based Cottage Industries:

Road Maps and strategies for Agro-based Cottage Industries developed by **NERCORMP** for its project areas are-

- (1). Brand development.
- (2). Establishment of market infrastructure.
- (3). Creation of marketing linkage.
- (4). Transportation linkage.
- (5). Project development.

Conclusion:

Small-scale and cottage industries are no doubt very important for the economy of Assam and North-east in particular and the economy of India as a whole. Recognizing the important role that small-scale industrial sector play in the national economy, both the central and state government have to take active step to develop, promote and foster their growth. Small-scale and cottage industries are suffering from a number of problems; some are more or less common to a wide range of industries while others have particular relevance to a group of industries located in rural and backward areas. The opportunities are vast in the region but we still need a holistic approach for overall development of the economy of Assam.

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Child Labour and Human Rights

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Abstract:

Children are the most valuable assets of the nation. Their importance in nation building process cannot be undermined. Children of today are the potential citizen of tomorrow. Child labour is also used for employment of children below a certain age, which is considered illegal by law and custom. The stipulated age varies from country to country and government to government. Child Labour is a worldwide phenomenon which considered exploitative and inhuman by many International organizations. The term is used for domestic work, factory work, agricultural work, mining, quarrying having own work or business like selling food etc helping parent's business and doing odd jobs. It is estimated about 8.4 million children are engaged in worst forms of Child Labour. There are certain causes and various forms of child labour. They are engaged in various sectors of the economy like manufacturing sector, sericulture, agrarian sector and service sector. There are certain constitutional and legal provisions to safeguards and to stop child labour. The government has already adopted certain National Policies and projects to stop child labour. It is the moral duty of every guardians and civic society should try to improve the health conditions of children. Some of them are beaten, reduced to slavery or denied freedom of movement and thus making child labour a Human Rights and a developmental issue. So I think there is a great violation of human rights. We should try to create a healthy and congenial atmosphere in which children should develop their personality. The UNICEF and Human Right Commission are playing very vital and important role for the development of children and stop discrimination against children.

Keywords: Environment Development, Rights, Freedom, Economy, Employment, Safeguard, Education, Prohibition, Elimination, Condition, Constitution

Introduction:

Children are the blooming flowers in the garden of society. They are the most valuable assets of the nation and their importance in nation building process can not be undermined. Children of today are the potential citizens of tomorrow.

Children need to grow in an environment that enables them to lead a life of freedom and dignity. Opportunities of education and training are to be provided for them to grow into worthy citizens unfortunately a large proportion of children are deprived of their basic rights and needs. They are found working in various sectors of the economy, particularly in the unorganized sector. Some of them are beaten, reduced to slavery or denied freedom of movement thus making child labour a human rights issue and a developmental issue.

Definition:

The Child labour (Prohibition and Regulation) Act, 1986 defines child as “a person who has not completed his fourteenth years of age”. According to the International Labour Organization “child labour includes children pre-maturely leading adult lives working long hours for low wages under conditions damaging to their health and to their physical and mental development.” They are often separated from their families and deprived of the meaningful -education and training opportunities that would offer them a better future.

Childhood is required to be a period of evolving capacities of “development of the child’s personality, talents and mental and physical abilities to their fullest potential” primarily through education. During this period, a child has a right” to a standard of living adequate for the child’s physical, mental, spiritual, moral and social development”.

Worst Forms of child labour – Global scenario:

It is estimated that there are about 8.4 million children who are engaged in worst forms of child labour. This includes trafficking 1.2 million, forced bonded labour 5.7 million, armed conflict 0.3 million, prostitution 1.8 million, and illicit activities 0.6 million.

(Source I.L.O, 2002)

Causes of child Labour:

Child Labour is inherent in the vicious circle of poverty, unemployment, under employment and low wages. Three factors are responsible for this inequitable distribution of resources, centralized and lopsided economy and the backward nature of agriculture.

The main Causes of Child Labour are:

- (i) Ignorance of parents about consequences of child labour.
- (ii) Traditions of making children learn family skills.
- (iii) Absence of universal compulsory primary education.
- (iv) Social apathy towards child labour.
- (v) Non-availability and non accessibility of schools.
- (vi) Irrelevant and unattractive school curriculum.
- (vii) Preference of employees for children, as they constitute cheap labour.
- (viii) Unemployment and low family income.
- (ix) Migration of urban areas.
- (x) Large families.
- (xi) Children supplement the income of the family.
- (xii) Occupational rigidities of cast system.
- (xiii) Employment structure in unorganized sector.
- (xiv) Ineffective enforcement of the legal provisions pertaining to child labour.

Forms of Child Labour:

Children are engaged

- As laborer in both unorganized sectors, which do not come within the purview of law?
- As migrant labourer from rural area to urban area,
- As bonded labourer pledged by the parent or guardian to the employer in lieu of debts or payments.

Sectors of the Economy in which children work:

(1) Manufacturing sector – children are engaged in various manufacturing process of different home based industries. Very often they work in sub-human conditions and exploitation situations. Some of these industries are

- a) Brass ware
- b) Lock
- c) Diamond cutting
- d) Gem polishing

- e) Glass and bangle making industries
- f) Carpet making
- g) Stone quarries
- h) Brick factory

Sericulture – Silk industries.

- i) Beedi Making

(2) Agrarian Sector:

In rural areas children are engaged in agricultural and allied occupations as a part of family labour or as individual workers.

(3) Service Sector:

In the service sector, children form part of

- i) Self employed labour
- j) Invisible labour.
- k) Wage based employment

Adverse effects of child labour on the health of children:

Children work for long hours often in dangerous and unhealthy conditions and are exposed to lasting physical and psychological harm. They tend to develop

- i) Mental disabilities.
- ii) Loss of appetite
- iii) Tumors and burns
- iv) Respiratory problems such as asthma, tuberculosis.
- v) General weakness, stunted growth, body ache and joint pains.
- vi) Disability by working on looms.
- vii) Susceptibility to arthritis as they grow older.

Constitutional and legal Safeguard to stop child Labour:

- (i) Constitutional provisions – The framers of the constitution of India realized that children are the most vulnerable section of the society and thus are at the maximum risk of being economically exploited. In order to safeguard children against economic exploitation the constitution makes the following provisions.

- (I) Fundamental rights – Article 21 a Right to Education. The state shall provide free and compulsory education to all children of the age of 6 to 14 years.

Article – 23 (1) Prohibition of traffic in human being and forced labour

Traffic in human beings and beggar and other similar forms of forced labour are prohibited and any contravention of this provision shall be an offence punishable in accordance with law.

Article -24 Prohibition of employment of children in factories etc.

No child below the age of 14 years shall be employed to work in any factory or mine or engaged in any other hazardous employment.

- (II) Directive Principles of state policy- Article – 39, certain principles of state policy to be followed by the state children are given opportunities and facilities to develop their personality without any discrimination.

Article -45- Provision for early childhood care and education to children below the age of 6 years.

The state shall Endeavour to provide early childhood care and education for all children until the age of 6 years.

Duty of the Parents/Guardian towards the child. It is the duty of every citizen of India, who is the guardian or parents to provide opportunities for education to his child.

Legislations:

A number of legislations have been enacted from time to time. The following is the list of such legislations which aim at elimination of child labour from hazardous industries and regulation of their conditions of employment in other non hazardous occupations.

- i) Factories Act, 1948
- ii) Plantation labour Act, 1951
- iii) Mines Act, 1952
- iv) Motor Transport workers Act, 1961
- v) Apprenticeship Act, 1961
- vi) Beedi and cigar workers (Conditions of employment)Act,1966

- vii) The Bonded Labour System(abolition system act 1976
- viii) Child labour (Prohibition and Regulation) Act, 1986

International Safeguards:

Convention on the Rights of the child India became a party to the convention on the Rights of the child, on 11 December 1992. The Convention gives substance to India's concern for the protection of the rights of children in all spheres including protection from economic exploitation. As a signatory, India is under obligation to take the necessary legislative, administrative, social and educational measures to ensure the implementation of the convention.

Besides, India has ratified six ILO (International Labour Organization) conventions relating to child Labour, three of them as early as the first quarter of the 20th century. The International labour conference adopted a resolution on child labour in 1979. The resolution called for a combination of child Labour and measures for humanizing child Labour wherever the ILO through the Global technical co-operation on child labour known as the international program on the elimination of child labour has been playing an important role in the process of gradual elimination of child labour and protection of child from industrial exploitation. It has focused its attention on five major issues.

- (i) Prohibition of child labour.
- (ii) Protecting child labour at work.
- (iii) Attacking the basic causes of child
- (iv) Helping children to adopt to future work.
- (v) Protecting the children of working parents.

In June 1999, the ILO adopted the convention on the worst forms of child Labour. This convention address issues such as rehabilitation and social integration of child labourers.

United Nations International children's emergency (UNICEF) acknowledges the importance of child Labour prevention and elimination. It accordingly supports government and civil society in their efforts to redress the needs and right of all children.

National Child Labour Policy:

Elimination of child labour demands sustained efforts over a period of time. Enactment of child labour laws, rehabilitation of child labour and preventing entry of children to work should be part of the elimination strategy. Efforts should be made to improve the

economic status of their parents through various anti-poverty and employment generation programmes.

The National child Labour Policy 1987 includes the following factors.

- i) Improving health conditions for child laborers.
- ii) Rehabilitation of child labour withdrawn from employment.
- iii) Reducing the incidence of child labour progressively.
- iv) Strict enforcement of the Provisions of the child labour (Prohibition and Regulation) Act, 1986 and other concerned legislations.
- v) Providing nutrition through schemes like the integrated child development services.
- vi) Providing better education through formal and non formal system of education.
- vii) Intensifying the anti-poverty programmes such integrated rural development services.
- viii) Stress on areas known to have high concentration of child labour,
- ix) Adopting a project approach to identify, withdrawn and rehabilitate working children.

The National Child Labour Projects (NCLP) launched in 1986 is time bound project that seek to implement model programmes consisting of key elements such.

- (a) Raising public awareness
- (b) Expanding formal and non formal education.
- (c) Promoting school enrolment through various incentives, such as payment of stipend.
- (d) Stepping up the enforcement of the prohibition of child labour.
- (e) Providing employment of parents of child labour.
- (f) Survey and evaluation.

Role of the National Human Rights Commission:

The NHRC is deeply concerned about the employment of child labour in the country. The commission has observed that even after 65 years of Independence child labour persists in the country. Despite various constitutional provisions, passing of legislations, becoming a party to international conventions, announcements of a national child labour policy, the

constitution of National Authority for the Elimination of Child Labour and the undertaking of national child labour projects, the goal of eradicating child labour remains elusive of estimated 2 million children working in hazardous industries by the year 2000 has not been achieved.

The commission focused its attention on the following industries where from rampant reports of child labours were received.

These include:

- (1) Bangle /Glass industries.
- (2) Silk Industries.
- (3) Lock industries,
- (4) Stone Quarries
- (5) Brick Kiln
- (6) Diamond cutting.
- (7) Ship-breathing
- (8) Construction work.
- (9) Carpet weaving.

The commission has been monitoring the child labour situation in the country through its special rapporteurs visits by members, sensitization programmes and workshops, launching projects, interaction with the industry association and other concerned agencies co-ordination with the state govts and NGOs to ensures the adequate steps and taken to eradicate child labour. The commission specially monitoring the carpet belt area in the U.P, the bangle glass industry in Ferozabad and silk industry in Karnataka.

Unless the reality of facts and compulsory education for all up to the completion of the age of 14 years is realized, the problem of child labour shall continue. To that end the commission has involved the NGO sector in the non-formal education of child labourers. A number of such schools and training centers are functioning in the districts of the carpet belt. There has also been a strict involvement in the level of awareness among the general public about the child labour issues.

The commission has been deeply concerned about the employment of children below 14 years as domestic servants by governments' employees. It took up the matter with the central government and state government to amend the civil services conduct rules prohibiting such employment. The relevant civil services conduct. Rules have been amended

by the central Government and almost all the state Government to the effect that employment of children below the age of 14 years as domestic servants by Government employees shall be regarded as a misconduct inviting major Penalty.

Conclusion:

In conclusion, we can say that child labour is also used for employment of children below a certain age, which is considered illegal by law and custom. The stipulated age varies from country to country and government to government. Child labour is a worldwide Phenomenon which is considered exploitative and inhuman by many international organizations. Child labour is also widely prevalent in some form or the other, all over the world. The term is used for domestic work, factory work, agriculture, mining, quarrying having own work or business like selling food etc. helping parent's business and doing odd jobs. It is the moral duty of every guardians and civic society should try to improve the health conditions of children. Some of them are beaten, reduced to slavery or denied freedom of movement and thus making child labour a Human Rights and a developmental issue. So I think there is a great violation of human rights. We should try to create a healthy and congenial atmosphere in which children should develop their personality. The UNICEF and Human Right Commission are playing very vital and important role for the development of children and stop discrimination against children.

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Existentialism: From the perspective of some existentialist Philosopher

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Abstract:-

Existentialism emphasizes the importance of man as an individual and his freedom and responsibility. It emerged as a reaction against both naturalism and idealism some of the existentialist philosopher are- Kierkegaard, Nietzsche, Jaspers, Heidegger and Sartre etc. In this article I am going to discuss the view of Soren Kierkegaard and Jaspers.

Existentialism does not aim at system building. Its approach is psychological. It emphasizes human existence. Existentialism draws a distinction between “essence” and “existence” but existentialists regard existence as prior to essence. Every existentialist philosophy is necessarily a personal interpretation; it is limited by the limitation of the author; if the quality of his experience is not of a high level, his thought will display his mediocrity; if he is lacking in wisdom, his interpretation will record his folly; if he is a neurotic, his failures of adjustment will be manifest. Kierkegaard and Nietzsche were neurotics; if much of their thought is of great value, much of it is repellent. Jaspers is the wisest of existentialists.

Keywords:-

Existence, Essence, World, Man, Freedom etc.

Introduction:-

Existentialism as theory is exclusively concerned with the questions of being and becoming. They are more interested in particular than universals, more concerned with existence than with the essence. Both naturalism and idealism deny human freedom. Existentialism is a reason against this falsification of human nature.

Analysis:-

Existentialism had its base in German Romanticism which was a protest against the emphasis on ‘rationality’ of eighteenth century “Enlightenment”

Soren Kierkegaard:-

The Danish theologian, Soren Kierkegaard has been regarded as the father of Existentialism. Friedrich Nietzsche also may be termed as one of the forerunners of Existentialism. Neither Kierkegaard nor Nietzsche was a systematic philosopher; rather their views were against systematic philosophy. Soren Kierkegaard revolted against Hegel's Doctrine of Pure thought. He emphasized subjective truth and a person's conditioned thinking as an existing individual. For him, an individual is unique and not an eternally realized fact in the absolute. He has a dynamic nature, freedom and responsibility. His decisions are personal. The nature of God is different from those of finite individuals. The existence of a human being, for Kierkegaard is prior to 'essence'.

Kierkegaard was a Christian mystic and believed in God who aimed from above at the existing individual. The individual experiences God in his momentary existence an ethical choice. The individual also maintains his individuality in union with God who remains an 'Absolute other'. Other existentialists made Kierkegaard's concept of 'existence' as basic to their Existentialism.

Karl Jaspers:-

Jaspers officially defined Existentialism as "a philosophy which does not complete objects, but elucidates and makes actual the being of the thinker".

According to Jaspers the metaphysical Being has three modes; Being there, Being oneself and Being in itself, he begins his philosophy with the assumption that there is a universe around us with a thinking Being. The objects of the universe are stable and our knowledge of these objects is controlled and regulated by these objects. The objective world can be understood by the methods of science.

Jaspers does not support the nihilist views of Soren Kierkegaard. He says that nihilism destroys man's attitude towards life and it does not enlighten him in any way to do his duty. Jaspers does not believe that anyone can attain peace by withdrawing from the world and abandoning his activities in the world. He states "the reality of the world cannot be evaded". If we deny the world and its reality, then philosophy will have no use for us, because the aim of philosophy is to guide man in this world and not to preach escapism. According to him the real peace for man is dynamic peace which man can attain through his inner strength by maintaining calm in the midst of tribulations of life.

Jaspers has given a practical trend to Existentialism. For him the function of philosophy is to help man to cope with life's innumerable problems and to provide him with a determined will to stand boldly against the various crises of life.

Conclusion:-

First, existentialism is right in laying stress on the 'individual' because he is the starting point of philosophical speculation. If there is the world, he knows it as the object of his experience. If the society exists, he reacts upon it and is acted upon by it. If God exists, he experiences Him or aspires to experience him. Secondly, existentialism is right in emphasizing 'freedom' of the individual. The individual determined by physical and social environment. But he is not entirely determined by it. He is free in his choice and action. He can create and appreciate values. Thirdly existentialism is right in starting with man as existing.

But existentialism does not bring out the philosophical implications of the various types of man's experience, interrelate them to one another, and attempt to arrive at a rational conception of Reality as a whole. It describes man's mental crisis and indulges in mere psychologizing. But psychologizing is not philosophizing. Some existentialists are theists; others are atheists. They do not make any positive contribution to philosophy. Existentialism is the philosophy of crisis and disillusionment.

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IDL Approach in Indian Higher Education

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Abstract:

There must be some significant, serious and meaningful learning through an educational process in order to have a learning of meaningful experience and hereby a constructive conclusion educational system must offer the learner a range of skills, and insights into the field or experience. An interdisciplinary learning (IDL) is salient to promote this for learning in real and productive sense. IDL has its own techniques, provides learners to see different perspectives of their activities, work in groups, and make the synthesizing of disciplines the ultimate goal. As the interdisciplinary approach continues to synthesize the characteristics and methods of multiple disciplines while developing lifelong learning skills, they will have met the goals that are being objected. Interdisciplinary curricula is time consuming and takes collaborative team work to create, which can seem like a hard and exhausting disadvantage, but in the end, the interdisciplinary approached inhibits many favored skills that are sought by future colleges and employers. The paper tries to explain the importance and need of ID learning focusing its importance in the changing scenario of higher education in Indian system.

Key words: Teaching-learning, Knowledge, Skill Interdisciplinary learning (IDL)

1. Introduction:

“People carry within them the potential for self-actualisation and self-direction through continuous development” - - - - - Swami Vivekananda.

Prof. G. Thiruvassagam, Vice-Chancellor, University of Madras once said “Producing employable graduates is the key to solving the massive unemployment issue”. This clearly signifies the degree of importance of education in solving our socio-economic issues and problems. There is absolutely no doubt that today education is playing an indispensable role in the socio-economic development of people and the nation as a whole. Therefore, institutions of higher education should provide ample opportunity for creation, dissemination and application of knowledge and skill. Unfortunately, the present system of higher education has isolated itself from the ground reality and grooming young learners in an artificial atmosphere that encourages for competition instead of developing skill and excellence within them. Many a time, students of a specific discipline consider it as a taboo to go beyond the confinement of their own discipline.

2. **Concept of Interdisciplinary learning (IDL):**

Both the 'National Knowledge Commission' and 'Yash Pal Committee on Renovation and Rejuvenation of Higher Education' in their reports have lamented the fact that our students and teachers of higher education are in a box of education system within which there are smaller boxes with no interaction within themselves or the outside. Probably, this is the reason why almost all the educational reports have repeatedly emphasized the need for interdisciplinary-learning (IDL) learning within the dimensions of higher education in order to sustain teaching-learning process to meet the demands of job or profession in the market that has changed in the world of globalization. Today, students are to be exposed themselves to multiple subjects under the aegis of one university or college. Besides knowledge, students have to pick up transferable skills and excellence in their thought and action. The idea must be incorporated in the curriculum so that learners could get opportunity to grow as multi-tusker. There was a time when a person has to remain in one profession through the lifetime, but now the idea is changed and no more working. An US survey has shown that on an average a person changes at least 10 professions in lifetime. This implies that instead of preparing a career for life, today learners have to prepare their life for career. Moreover, the gap between institutional input and industrial requirements can be filled only by inculcating two capabilities within the learners. Firstly, the task performance capability that helps acquiring skills required by employer. Secondly, building conceptual performance that helps to earn not only the knowledge in proper sense but also skills and excellence necessary for a particular job in a profession. These are not be possible through a single curriculum, but through an integrated curriculum i.e. integration of curriculum within relevant disciplines or fields, commonly called interdisciplinary (ID).

IDL from the period of renaissance:

An ID study is one that integrates concept(s) and ideas across different disciplines through systematic ways of learning. This could be done through systematic analysis and synthesis of coherence of ideas or concepts within the two or more disciplines. Synthesizing more than one relevant discipline creates overall knowledge and experience. It sometimes leads a new discipline or branch. Broadly, it is an approach where inquiries are drawn critically within two or more disciplines leading to an integration of disciplinary insight. This also helps in evolving new concepts and ideas that could be applied successfully to other fields as well. For example, History, Literature and Archaeology are separate disciplines but could be studied together with an idea to get coherence among them. In the age of great scientific revolutions the great genius like Socrates, Galileo Galilee, Isaac Newton, Robert Hook, Louis Pasteur and many others had carried out their study in interdisciplinary (ID) way that ultimately led the revolutionary discoveries and inventions. In the present days, many ID disciplines are proved to be great importance and demand. For example, Quantum physics and Computer science are amalgamated into the ID discipline called Information

Processing and Management_Science. Similarly, Bioinformatics is the coherence of Molecular biology and Computer science; Biophysics is the coherence field of Physics and Biology; Environmental Studies, Global Climate Change, Nanotechnology, Genomics and Proteomics, Peace and Conflict study etc. are few examples of present day popular ID discipline. Many of our great research triumphs are products of ID inquiry and collaboration; e.g. discovery of structure of DNA, MRI technique, the Manhattan Project, Laser surgery of eye, Radar, Human genome sequencing, Man's journey of Moon and Space etc.

An ID study is basically different from multidisciplinary study (MDS). MDS is an approach to study topic(s) from more than one discipline in parallel to other while ID approach is the critical study in search of coherence of ideas and concepts within relevant fields or disciplines. ID study provides many benefits. While it rejects practical boundary of a discipline by encouraging learner to go beyond his or her discipline with the subject matter of another, it inhabits habits of critical thinking, creativity, pedagogy that helps learners to grow themselves in proper way. It helps to experience of working in groups, inculcate the habit of analysis and synthesize in order to get ultimate goal. It integrates the common contributions of relevant fields that may evolve new techniques by allowing seeing different perspectives of common problem. The technique favoured skills that are often sought by employers. The process not only helps in developing a clear understanding on problem or fundamentals of the disciplines but also evolves new parameter of understanding or concepts that may differ from conventional or traditional. The result or conclusion may be applied to some other field as well. Thus, ID study means an extensional work that integrates knowledge and concepts within the perspectives of multiple areas of expertise to holistically solve problems through research and education. This in turn also helps in developing the much needed lifelong learning skills.

3. Conclusion:

In the present scenario of expanding horizon of information and knowledge, ID study is very much essential for successful success of academic pursuance that could provide employability to the youngsters. It has also benefits in organizing disciplines, to meet the challenges of conventional ideas/concepts those persist in a discipline. It unfurls views that subverts and utilize practically in many fields. This is why such learning is sometime called critique of disciplines. Although our country has made appreciable progress in regard to creation of infrastructure for education, but the present unemployment rate is monstrous. There are more than 6-crore well-educated youth who are unemployed in our country. On the other hand employers have complained many times that they are unable to find required talent from young graduates. This is because of the fact that we have serious shortage of skilled graduates and the excellence over a job or profession. The solution seems to be in remote because most of the present conventional universities and colleges of our country are going through the traditional and the theoretical way of teaching-learning. Therefore, the need of the hour

for our regular university and college is to ensure knowledge construction by designing employable ID curricula for proper dissemination of knowledge and development of skill. Not to forget that today a student could be a needed product only by inculcating knowledge and acquiring relevant skills in proper form in present market of knowledge economy.
