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## An Assessment of E-Learning Readiness of Academic Staff And Students of Higher Education Institutions in Gujarat, India

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### Abstract

Gujarat state has many prestigious higher education institutions which are inclined towards using e-learning platform. In order to ensure that the stakeholders derive optimum benefit from this platform there is a serious need to conduct cross-sectional studies to assess their eLearning readiness. This study is an attempt in this direction. Data was collected (physical/e-form) through a self-developed questionnaire from the accessible sample of 83 faculties, 153 students and 12 lab administrators belonging to 35 colleges which are using the e-learning practices. Frequency, percentage and intensity index were used to analyze the data. The findings of the study reveal that, most of the stakeholders have positive opinion regarding the infrastructure available to adopt e-learning practices but feel that there is a need for improvement in the facilities. Majority of the stakeholders have a positive perception towards concept of e-learning and believe that e-learning has many benefits and they also felt that e-learning helps to a less extent in maintaining transparency, reduces face to face contact and interactivity. These factors may hinder their readiness towards e-learning. Also unreliable technology and lack of faculties' confidence and expertise to use this platform in teaching environment are seen as biggest barriers in e-learning. Hence, there is an immediate need to plan for training programmes which will help in improving the confidence of faculties in using this platform and would increase their e-learning readiness.

**Keywords:** Higher Education, E-learning, Information and communication technology (ICT), e-learning readiness.

## Introduction

Indian higher education is one of the world's largest system. Despite significant progress over the last ten years, it still faces four broad challenges i.e., the supply-demand gap; the low quality of teaching and learning; constraints on research capacity and innovation; uneven growth and access to opportunity. Educational technologies especially e-learning is proving to be a good solution and of highest priority in addressing the quality issues in higher education. E-learning is an emerging virtual reality in the educational organizations and is opening new opportunities of transforming the educational process and the system. If well designed and managed, e-learning can overcome many barriers associated with traditional learning (Hijazi et.al, 2003). E-learning is a concept which encompasses students, faculty, and e-learning managers (Persico et.al, 2014). The challenges posed by e-learning are better understood and addressed when there is an understanding about its stakeholder's readiness towards it (Kaur&Abas, 2004). However, the increasing trend of adoption of e-learning in higher education institutions is raising questions like: What is the opinion of the students, faculties towards e-learning, its advantages, dis-advantages and challenges?

How far is the faculty ready in terms of their skills to ensure that the powers of these growing technologies are harnessed?

The evaluation of e-readiness demands that it should be studied from two points: (a). the point of view of its various stakeholders (students, teachers, e-learning experts/lab administrators etc) (Agboola, 2006; Persico et al, 2014) (b). From point of view of various factors like technological, organizational, environmental, nature of course offered etc. (Kaur&Abas, 2004). From the perspective of stakeholders, most of the times faculties perceive e-learning to be positive and useful. However, they also had many issues which reduced their readiness towards e-learning. (Siphamandla et.al, 2014; FathimathThaufeega, 2016). On the other hand, majority of the students also perceived that e-learning is useful and effective (Fageeh, 2011). However, studies also showed that students satisfaction was less in e-learning platform than in traditional system or they were still not ready for e-learning (Keller & Cernerud, 2002; Kaur&Abas, 2004; FathimathThaufeega, 2016). Studies also suggested that institutions, policy makers and regulatory bodies have to play a more concrete role in enhancing the e-learning facilities and programmes (Kaur&Abas, 2004).



In India, a fair amount of literature on e-learning studies dealt with aspects like e-learning quality (Agariya & Singh, 2012), perceptions, readiness, attitude towards e-learning (Azimi, 2013). However, majority of these studies are focused to study the readiness or perceptions from a single point of view like that of teachers or students or administrators. Moreover, these studies confine to very micro level with single university or an institution (Azimi, 2013). Gujarathas 62 universities and 2093 colleges with 11,34,089 students enrolled in it every year and thus is witnessing a tremendous growth in higher education. Hence, there is a strong need for doing such study. The present study is undertaken to explore the e-learning readiness among faculties, students and lab administrators of higher education institutions of Gujarat with respect to various aspects like facilities or resources available for adopting e-learning, perception and abilities of stakeholders towards e-learning etc.

### **Theoretical Framework**

E-learning readiness is the level of mental and physical preparedness or readiness of an organization towards various aspects of e-learning like technological skills, online learning style, equipment/infrastructure, attitude, human resources, financial etc

(Parlakkiliç, Alaattin, 2015; Mutiaradevi.R, 2009). The various critical success factors for e-learning identified by various researchers included aspects instructor; student; information technology; university support, financial, infrastructure, human resources, content, environment, psychological, social etc (Khan, 2012; Hasan, 2007; Tubaishat and Lansari, 2011)

### **Objectives**

The following are the objectives of the present study:

- To study the infrastructure available in the institutions adopting e-learning practices in Gujarat.
- To study the opinion of faculties, students and lab administrators regarding the concept of e-learning, its benefits, dis-advantages and challenges.
- To study the abilities of faculties and laboratory administrators with respect to use of various e-learning tools.

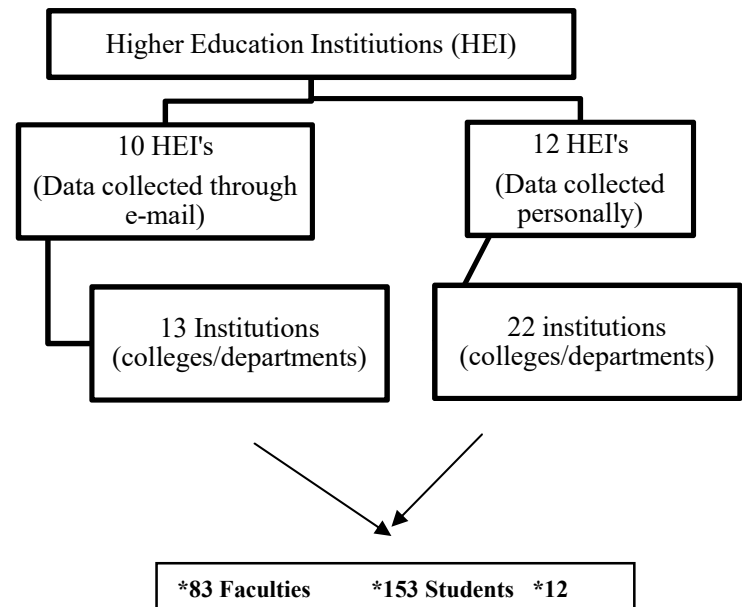
### **Research design and Methodology**

#### **Sample**

The commissionerate of Higher Education, Government of Gujarat maintains the database of all higher education institutions in Gujarat. All those educational institutions which have their website were contacted through e-mail for the purpose of the study.

A mail clarifying them about the definition of e-learning was sent to them and they were asked if their institutions were adopting e-learning practices or not. 35 colleges responded positively that they were using e-learning practices. To respect the rights, values, and sentiments of the research participants, we informed them about the purpose of the study and confidentiality. The data collection was carried out with an assurance of maintaining the anonymity of participating institutions and its stakeholders. Out of these, 22 colleges which did not show acceptance to respond to the e-tool were personally visited to study their practices and collect the data. The faculties, students and lab administrators of remaining 13 colleges who showed positive response to fill the e-tool were sent the same. Thus, in all 83 faculties, 153 students and 12 lab administrators from various programmes like medicines, engineering, management, education etc of 35 colleges participated in the study. Therefore, the sample for the present study is based on accessible population rather than on target population.

**Figure 1: Participants in the study**



### **Instrument**

The study adopted across-sectional survey design involving a random sample of faculties, students and lab administrators. Data were gathered with the use of self made questionnaire developed by the researcher after going through extensive literature and objectives of the study (Aydin and Tasci, 2005; A. K. Agboola, 2006; Mutiaradevi.R, 2009; Khan, 2012; Hasan, 2007; Tubaishat and Lansari, 2011). Separate questionnaire for students, teachers and lab administrators was developed to collect data from them. After making the changes in the tool as per the suggestions given by the experts, the tool was used for data collection. To maximise the number of

participants, the questionnaires were made available both in e-form and hard copy. The tools developed contained a combination of items like Yes/No and rating scale items. Tools contained questions related to aspects like: computer and internet abilities of students, concept of e-learning, opinion regarding the e-learning practices being adopted at the institution, familiarity with e-learning technologies etc.

### **Data Analysis**

Intensive care was taken to ensure that the participants respond to all the questions of the tool. The collected data was analyzed using percentages, frequencies, intensity index etc. Intensity index is the statistical technique used to measure the exact point of intensity preferred by the sample as a whole in a 3 to 7 point of preference against any statement or item. It indicates the exact preference, like, or dislike about a situation in a Likert type of scale. Intensity Index was calculated using the following formula for an item in a five point scale arranging from higher intensity to lower intensity i.e. (strongly agreed, agreed, undecided, disagreed, strongly disagreed).

$$\text{Intensity Index (II)} = ((f_1 \times 5) + (f_2 \times 4) + (f_3 \times 3) + (f_4 \times 2) + (f_5 \times 1)) / (f_1 + f_2 + f_3 + f_4 + f_5)$$

where  $f_1, f_2, f_3, f_4$  and  $f_5$  are the frequency of respondents for strongly agreed, agreed, undecided, disagreed and strongly disagreed respectively. The analyzed data was then synthesized and presented.

## **Results and Discussion**

### **Findings related to Facilities/Resources Available For Adopting E-Learning Practices**

Connectivity and physical communications infrastructure are the foundation of electronic-readiness for a country (Eze et al. (2013); Aydin & Tasci, 2005). From the findings it was observed that, many of the higher educational institutions have Wi-Fi connectivity in their campus and hence in such institutions the concept of physical computer lab did not exist. However, the institutions which did not have Wi-Fi connectivity in the campus had a minimum 2 computer labs and in some institutions they even have 4 or more computer labs. Almost all the higher educational institutions have more than one computer lab and in many of these institutions, the ratio of computers to students in all the institutions is around 1:2. Further, in 80% of the computer labs of the institutions, all the systems have internet connection. In most of the institutions, the CMS/LMS/CLMS

(Campus Management System/Learning Management System/Content Learning Management System) has facilities related to attendance, results of students, students assignments etc. The system also has important downloads of programmes and software's which are useful to the faculty and students. CMS of a few institutions also provide access to the digital libraries of their institutions. Institutions use software and applications like Acado, google docs etc. to download and upload assignments.

With regard to the infrastructure/resources available with the institutions for adopting e-learning practices:

### **Faculties**

It is found that as high as 73% of faculties responded that they have individual personal computers for them in their staff rooms. Among them, 90% of participants responded that their personal computers are connected to internet.

### **Lab administrators:**

Around 63.64% lab administrators claim that their institutions have software specialists for the purpose of adopting e-learning practices, and around 54.55% of lab administrators claim that they have the authoring tools which are required for the

purpose of adopting e-learning practices. 100% of the lab administrators claim that their institutions have high bandwidth connectivity and much secured network connectivity. 90% of the lab administrators claim that they have free and unlimited internet access. With respect to connectivity with digital libraries, around 72.73% of the lab administrators claim that their network has connectivity with the digital libraries of their institutions and also other pay and use digital libraries. A higher percentage of lab administrator's i.e. around 72.73% of them said that latest software were available with them. However, only 36.36% of lab administrators expressed that they used LMS (Learning Management System) for providing e-learning practices.

Studies by Mutiaradevi. R, 2009, Siphamandla Ncube, et.al, 2014, Parlakkiliç, Alaattin, 2015 support the point that facilities/resources available for adopting e-learning practices play an important role in determining the e-learning readiness. The results obtained in this study also highlight the point that there is a need to improve the facilities/resources available for adopting e-learning in higher education institutions of Gujarat.

### **Findings related to Perception regarding E-Learning**

Studies reported that individual readiness and positive perception about e-learning significantly improve the effective use of e-learning (Aydin&Tasci, 2005; Sadik, 2007). In our survey, the respondents were asked their perception about e-learning. From the findings, it was found that

#### **Faculties:**

as high as, 71.08% of the faculties felt that e-learning is a valuable practice and around 24.1% of the faculties felt that e-learning is very valuable. 83.13% of the faculties felt that gender was not significant for responding to e-learning (Aydin and Tasci, 2005; Parlakkiliç, Alaattin, 2015). However, this is in contradiction to study carried out by Agboola(2006), Proctor& Burnett (2006) where the investigators reported that gender was significant for the perceptions of e-learning confidence. Moreover, 50.6% of the faculties expressed that academically well prepared students responded more positively to e-learning practices than academically less prepared students.

#### **Lab Administrators:**

Around 58.3% of lab administrators felt that e-learning is a very valuable practice. This shows that faculties and lab administrators believe positively in the value of e-learning

which is a good sign for higher education institutions in moving towards e-learning platform. Findings deduced by Akaslan, D., & Law, E. (2011), Aydin&Tasci, 2005; Sadik, 2007 indicate that attitude directly affects individuals readiness for e-learning.

From the above results, it is clear that faculties and lab administrators believe positively in value of e-learning and also feel that gender does not appear to moderate the students response towards e-learning. This is a good sign for the institutions which are using the e-learning practices and also for the institutions which are planning to use e-learning practices in the near future.

### **Findings related to Benefits of E-learning**

Positive culture is created in the institute if all the stakeholders realize the benefits of e-learning (Sadik, 2007). The questions related to benefits of e-learning were asked to determine whether participants understood and appreciated the benefits of e-learning. Lack of this may have a bearing upon the uptake of e-learning.

#### **Faculties:**

As shown in table1, the intensity index obtained for the statements regarding the personal benefits of e-learning as perceived by faculties' ranged from 2.26 to 3.23. From



the obtained intensity indices it is clear that, most of the faculties felt that spreading of information related to the content becomes easy and faster in the e-learning platform. Faculties also felt that with the help of e-learning platform it becomes easy to update the student's records and e-learning helps the students to learn at their own pace at any time and in any place. Re-use of the content is also seen as one of the benefits of e-learning. In terms of professional benefits of e-learning, faculties responded that the highest advantage of e-learning is that they can reach more students in less time. According to them, in e-learning platform, it is easy to provide additional information regarding the course to the students.

**Table 1:** Percentage Wise Distribution of Ranking for the Personal and Professional Benefits of E-Learning as Marked by Faculties along with Intensity Index (II)

Personal Benefits					
Particulars	1 <sup>st</sup>	2 <sup>nd</sup>	3 <sup>rd</sup>	4 <sup>th</sup>	II
Spreading of information related to the content becomes easy and faster.	47.14	34.2	12.86	5.71	3.23
Students can learn at any place, pace, and any time	34.25	17.8	24.66	23.2	2.63
Re-use of content	17.57	21.6	29.73	31.0	2.26
Easy to update the students records	35.62	21.9	21.92	20.5	2.84
Assist in maintaining transparency	19.12	19.1	30.88	30.8	2.26

Personal Benefits					
Particulars	1 <sup>st</sup>	2 <sup>nd</sup>	3 <sup>rd</sup>	4 <sup>th</sup>	II
Re-use of content	26.39	26.3	20.83	26.3	2.38
Easy to provide additional information regarding the course	29.85	40.3	19.40	10.4	2.90
Can reach more students in less time	52.70	25.6	10.81	10.8	3.20

These findings confirms the assertion made by various researchers that e-learning is not limited by time, space and location and many other benefits (Smedley, 2010;, SiphamandlaNcube, et.al, 2014; Unneberg, 2007). However, most of the faculties felt that the least benefit of e-learning is its ability to maintain transparency. During the process of data collection the investigator could observe that some faculties were using e-learning platform to its optimum extent both in teaching-learning and also in administrative works like sending notice/information to the students on various issues like availability of new content, notices related to hostels, examinations, assignments, providing additional literature etc.

### Lab administrators

Table 2 shows the benefits of e-learning as expressed by lab administrators. Just like faculties, even the lab administrators felt

that spreading of information becomes easy and faster in the e-learning platform and enabling of learning at any place, pace and at any time is another best benefit of e-learning. The benefit which is ranked 3<sup>rd</sup> by lab administrators is that they felt that e-learning helps in development of professional skills and thus it enables them to be up to date with professional needs. These findings are in line with the studies by Wagner et.al, 2008, Smedley, 2010 who deduced that ease of communication, flexibility of time, place and pace are the most important benefits of e-learning.

**Table 2:** Percentage Wise Distribution of Ranking for the Benefits of E-Learning as Expressed by **Lab Administrators** along with Intensity Index (II)

Particulars	1 <sup>st</sup>	2 <sup>nd</sup>	3 <sup>rd</sup>	4 <sup>th</sup>	II
Spreading information becomes easy and faster	66.67	16.66	16.67	0	2.50
Helps in being upto date with professional needs	33.33	22.22	44.44	0	1.89
Assists in development of professional skills	33.33	44.44	22.22	0	2.11
Enables learning at any place, pace and any time	33.33	50.00	16.67	0	2.17

## Students

When it comes to student's perception regarding the benefits of e-learning, table 3 shows the findings. In terms of benefits of e-learning, students felt that the most important benefit of e-learning is that it enables learning at any time and at their own pace (Zhang et.al, 2006; Smedley, 2010).

**Table 3:** Percentage Wise Distributions of Ranking for the Benefits of E-Learning as Ranked by Students along with Intensity Index (II)

Particulars	1 <sup>st</sup>	2 <sup>nd</sup>	3 <sup>rd</sup>	4 <sup>th</sup>	5 <sup>th</sup>	II
Ease of access of information related to the course	27.21	17.6	21.3	28.7	5.15	3.33
Students can learn at their own pace	22.56	20.3	35.3	15	6.77	3.37
Enables learning at any time	25.55	38	24.1	10.2	2.19	3.74
Enables learning at any place	22.6	15.1	12.3	26.7	23.3	2.87
Assist in maintaining transparency	8.462	6.92	9.23	18.5	56.9	1.92

However, Keller & Cernerud, 2002 reported that the students did not regard access to e-learning as a benefit as compared to personal interaction. Many other studies reported that students preferred hybrid learning to complete online learning (Eldeeb, 2014). In some places where face-to-face mode was not available or it was not according to their convenience, students

opted for e-learning only (Huss and Eastep, 2013).

Moreover, just like faculty, students also gave last rank to the option of “assist in maintaining transparency”. This shows that just like faculties, even students feel that ability of e-learning in maintaining transparency is less. Thus, faculties, lab administrators and students all felt that access to information related to the course content becomes easy and fast in the e-learning platform and further it is easy to reach more students in less time. Also, they all almost equally felt that e-learning platform provides the scope for learning at own pace, at any time. On the part of the faculties, they felt that providing additional information regarding the course becomes easy in e-learning platform and it also becomes easy for them to reuse the content.

### Findings related to Dis-advantages of e-learning

Along with the benefits of e-learning, the participants were also asked to rate the disadvantages of e-learning.

#### Faculties:

The intensity index for dis-advantages of e-learning as expressed by the faculties ranges from 2.55 to 3.77 (table 4). The interpretation of the results shows that most of the faculties perceived that e-learning is

not a costly affair (Abu-Hassan-Assari, 2005) which is in contradiction to the study by Akkoyuklu & Soylu, 2006.

**Table 4:** Percentage Wise Distribution of the Ranking for the Dis-Advantages of E-Learning as Ranked by Faculty along with Intensity Index (II)

Particulars	1 <sup>st</sup>	2 <sup>nd</sup>	3 <sup>rd</sup>	4 <sup>th</sup>	5 <sup>th</sup>	II
It is a costly affair	21.	15.0	12.	16.	34.2	2.5
Handling and management of content is a technical affair	10.	24.3	24.	28.	12.1	2.9
It reduces face to face contact and interactivity	40.	22.6	18.	12.	6.67	3.7
As the content is available online for a long time, it reduces students interest	16.	31.5	17.	20.	13.7	3.1
In e-mode, it is difficult to trace the students' actual learning.	26.	20.2	27.	14.	11.5	3.3

The biggest disadvantage as perceived by faculties with respect to the e-learning platform was that it reduces face to face contact and interactivity (Young, 1997). Faculties also felt that in e-mode, it is difficult to trace the student's actual learning and that is why they rated least for the transparency aspect of e-

learning(Arkorful&Abaidoo, 2014). Further, as the content is available online for a long time, they also felt that it reduces student's interest in the content. Also some faculties felt that handling and management of content in the e-learning platform is a technical affair and hence it is seen as one of the disadvantages.

### Lab Administrators:

Most of the lab administrators felt that as the content is available online for a long time, it reduced the students interest with respect to that content.They also expressed that e-learning reduces face to face contact and interactivity.The two aspects of e-learning, i.e., 'it increases their workload' and also 'effective\real learning does not happen' were rated as the least dis-advantages of e-learning.

### Students

Students also felt that e-learning reduces face to face contact and interactivity similar to faculties and lab administrators and hence it is the biggest disadvantage of e-learning. The students also expressed that it is difficult to trace the students' actual learning in the e-mode (table 5).

**Table 5:** PercentageWiseDistribution of the Ranking for the Dis-Advantages of E-Learning as Ranked by

Students along with Intensity Index (II)

Particulars	1 <sup>st</sup>	2 <sup>nd</sup>	3 <sup>rd</sup>	4 <sup>th</sup>	II
E-learning reduces face to face contact and interactivity	31.75	31.75	14.29	22.22	2.73
As the study modules are available online for a long time, E-learning reduces students interest towards the modules	28.80	16.00	28.80	26.40	2.47
In e-mode, it is difficult to trace the students' actual learning.	21.77	27.42	33.06	17.74	2.53
Often, effective\real learning does not happen	23.02	24.60	23.81	28.57	2.42

All the three stakeholders felt that e-learning mode reduces face to face interactivity and it is actually very difficult to trace the actual performance of the students. They also said that as the e-learning modules were available for a longer time, it reduced students' interest towards these modules as they develop the tendency of postponing their tasks. Further, a few faculties felt that handling and management of content in e-learning mode is a technical affair and thus it is also considered as one of the disadvantage of e-learning. However, the positive sign came from lab administrators who felt that adopting e-learning practices does not increase the work pressure.

## Findings related to Challenges/Barriers to e-learning

### Faculties

The intensity indices obtained for statements which described the challenges/barriers to e-learning varied from 3.15 to 4.06 (table 6). According to faculty, "Lack of knowledge on how to use the e-content on the part of students" is perceived to be the least causing barrier in promoting e-learning practices. This shows a positive sign that most of the students have sufficient knowledge to use the e-learning practices. Further, faculties also expressed that adopting e-learning practices would not increase their work load (Lloyd et.al, 2012).

**Table 6:**PercentageWiseDistribution of the Ranking Given by Faculty for theChallenges/Barriers to E-Learning along with Intensity Index (II)

Particulars	1 <sup>st</sup>	2 <sup>nd</sup>	3 <sup>rd</sup>	4 <sup>th</sup>	5 <sup>th</sup>	6 <sup>th</sup>	I I
Students lack knowledge about how to use the e-content	1	1	1	2	1	2	3
Network access/ Usage problems (unreliable technology)	2	1	2	9.	1	5	4
Students lack self motivation in using e-content	2	1	1	1	9.	1	3
Faculties lack interest and confidence to use this technology in teaching environment	3	1	1	8.	1	1	4

Particulars	1 <sup>st</sup>	2 <sup>nd</sup>	3 <sup>rd</sup>	4 <sup>th</sup>	5 <sup>th</sup>	6 <sup>th</sup>	I I
Increasing work load on the part of faculties	1	2	2	1	1	1	3

However, unreliable technology and lack of interest and confidence on the part of faculties to use the e-learning practices were found to be biggest challenge by faculties in adopting e-learning

Practices (Agboola, 2006; Mutiaradevi, R, 2009; Parlakkiliç, Alaattin, 2015).Hence, proper measures need to be taken at institutional level to resolve the network access/usage problems. Also immediate measures should be taken by the administration of the institutions to boost up the faculties interest and confidence in adopting the e-learning platform. However, faculties also felt that students lack self-motivation in using the e-content, hence measures should be taken to identify the causes and solve this problem.

### Lab administrators

According to lab administrators, lack of sufficient infrastructure to promote e-learning and the technical nature of handling and managing the content in e-learning platform, lack of pre-trainingwere considered to be the biggest barriers in implementing the e-learning platform.



Unreliable technology was considered to be the least barrier in adopting e-learning which is in contrast to the opinion expressed by faculties. The findings in this section reveal that management should take some serious measures to increase the technical consistency of the e-learning platform. The findings of the study strongly support the fact that there is a need for organizing proper trainings to the faculties with regard to e-learning platform.

### **Findings related to Familiarity with e-learning tools**

When an institution decides to adopt e-learning, the stakeholders involved are required to demonstrate some experience on the e-learning design and delivery and they need to be familiar with tasks like development of instructional system, use of software and hardware etc which is necessary in order to lead the whole process through the stage of analysis, design, implementation, and evaluation (Driscoll, 2002).

### **Students**

In terms of working with computers, as high as 69% of the students said that they were very comfortable in working with the computers. More than 45% of the students work for more than 20 hours in a week on

computers and around 19% of them work between 20 and 10 hours in a week on computers. Around 35% of the students use computers between 1 to 9 hours in a week. This shows that most of the students in higher education institutions were comfortable in using computers. In terms of using the internet, a majority of students consider themselves as experienced users. Around 23% of students consider themselves as very experienced users and around 9% of the students consider themselves as champions in using internet (Fathimath Thaufeega, 2016). Most of the students have medium and advanced expertise in using a computer and internet. This is a very good sign for the higher educational institutions which are using e-learning practices. Most of the students logon to the institutions website or intranet more than once a day. However, the major barrier as seen in earlier sections is inferior quality of the practices that are adopted in the institutions.

### **Faculties**

When it comes to the use of e-learning tools by faculties and lab administrators, the intensity index obtained for faculties with respect to Learning Software/Virtual Tutorials, Computer Based Assessment,

Virtual Learning Environment (Eg. WebCT, Blackboard), Video conferencing, Authoring web pages(for specific learning outcomes), Electronic White Boards were 2.51, 2.4, 2.01, 1.98, 1.96, 1.94 respectively. These figures show that, only with reference to learning software/virtual tutorials faculties claimed that they were familiar with it. With reference to all other e-learning tools, faculties claimed that they have tried them once. A meager percentage of faculties i.e., 9.64%, 8.43%, 3.61%, 6.02% fell under the category of expert users with reference to e-learning tools like Virtual Learning Environment (Eg. WebCT, Blackboard...), Video conferencing, Authoring web pages(for specific learning outcomes), Electronic White Boards. The intensity index for each of these tool reveal that most of the faculties have tried these tools once or have not used them at all. A very meager percentage of faculties claimed that they were expert users with reference to their familiarity with the mentioned e-learning tools. This finding is in tune with the studies of Edumadze (2014), Rogers (2000), Alenezi (2012).

### **Lab administrators**

This scenario is observed to be better with lab administrators. One of the reasons for the above scenario could be that most of the

higher education institutions were using only basic e-learning facilities and hence might be the faculty did not get any opportunity to use these tools, or it could be that faculties did not have proper expertise to explore and use these tools. The other reason could also be that in most of the institutions managing the e-learning platform is considered as a technical task and hence it is mostly handled by lab administrators. If the higher education institutions want to reap maximum benefits from the e-learning practices that they are adopting, they should create a platform where their faculties are exposed to latest e-learning tools and not only exposing them but it should also be mandatory for the faculties to use these facilities. Further, the institutions should now start focusing both on the technical and pedagogical aspects of e-learning.

### **Limitations**

This study is limited to only state of Gujarat and the study involved only those higher education institutions which were listed on the Commissionerate of Higher Education, Government of Gujarat website. The study is also limited only to those institutions which responded that they were adopting e-learning practices. As less number of institutions responded that they are adopting

e-learning practices, this may threaten the representativeness of the sample, but the sample appears homogenous with the available accessible population. The access or limitations of resources available in these institutions could have also influenced the perceptions of participants regarding various aspects like benefits, dis-advantages and barriers of e-learning. Despite these limitations, the findings from this study are compatible with the current literature. Further, in spite of many efforts, researcher could not get any response from the institutions which are using fully online mode of e-learning. Hence, the study includes only those institutions which are using the blended mode of e-learning. A novel feature of this study is that it addresses several important constructs not previously assessed in the state of Gujarat. In addition, the points raised here speak about the need for further, expanded studies exploring not just the physical aspects of e-learning but also focusing on the pedagogical dimensions.

### **Directions for future study**

Even though the institutions claim that they use the e-learning platform, it can be noted that still they are in the infancy stage. Hence, there is a need to carry out deeper

studies to evaluate the objectives/mission/goal of the institutions in adopting the e-learning practices. Studies focusing on the pedagogical aspects of e-learning and other qualitative aspects of the forms of e-learning being offered in the educational institutions should be carried out. The number of institutions in India adopting fully online mode of e-learning are increasing and hence research studies in this direction can also be carried out. Also, now a days, many institutions are offering the same course in face to face mode and in fully online mode. Hence, comparative research studies to study the performance of students in traditional form of teaching-learning and fully online mode of e-learning can also be carried out.

### **Conclusions**

The present study is set out to determine the scenario of infrastructure available in the institutions adopting e-learning practices in Gujarat and also to study the opinion of stakeholders (faculties, students and lab administrators) regarding the concept of e-learning, its benefits, dis-advantages and challenges. An attempt is also made in the study to know the abilities of faculties and laboratory administrators with respect to use of various e-learning tools. The stakeholders

seem to appreciate about the infrastructure available to them in terms of computers and internet facilities but felt that it needs to be improved further. Overall, the stakeholders believe positively in the value of e-learning and feel that spreading of information related to the content becomes easy and faster in the e-learning platform and the platform helps to reach more students in less time and in e-learning platform students get the chance to learn at any time and in their own pace. Re-use of the content was also seen as one of the biggest benefits of e-learning. However, the stakeholders have apprehensions that e-learning mode reduces face to face interactivity and it is very difficult to trace the actual performance of the students. They also felt that availability of e-learning modules online for a longer time reduces student's interest as they develop the tendency of postponing the work. Also, the quality of the content that is posted in the e-platform was a big matter of concern for the students. Most of the faculties were interested in learning more about this platform. A point of concern is about the abilities/expertise of faculties in using various e-learning tools. This again puts forward the point that institutions have just begun this initiative of using e-learning

practices and have made least efforts in training the faculties in these e-learning tools. Hence, there is an immediate need in higher education institutions to take such measure which would develop the culture of using the e-learning practices in the institutions and also the government especially department of higher education should develop e-learning quality guidelines and should make it mandatory for all higher education institutions to follow these guidelines. For this purpose, government can take the help of higher education institutions that are already using e-learning practices effectively.

These findings are envisioned to present government, education stakeholders and educational institutions better understanding of the e-learning readiness before rolling the e-learning system to other institutions of higher learning. Therefore, the study will ignite the process of the formulation of national policies and strategies to enhance and support e-learning initiatives to counter and address the existing and future e-learning challenges given the foreseen potential of e-learning in higher education. The study will contribute to research literature especially

with reference to Gujarat where no such study was conducted till date.

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## The Bliss of Belonging: Reading Elsewhere, Home By Leila Aboulela

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*“An immigrant is a parent who finds out too late that she’s given up her child for adoption.”*  
Leila Aboulela

### ABSTRACT

*The present paper tries to understand the themes of migration, displacement and the meaning of belonging to a place with reference to the short story collection Elsewhere, Home published in 2018, written by critically acclaimed Sudanese writer Leila Aboulela. Moving to a new country is always not the key to realise ones all dreams because everything from culture, traditions, geographical territories, political leanings to identity changes when one migrates into a different new world and things do not always work the way one has thought or believed. The paper also tries to comprehend the meaning of home as it gives one the sense of identity and belonging. The paper looks at the complicated lives and identities of the minorities, refugees and immigrants in Diaspora and the way they think about the true meaning of home and a sense of getting accepted in a foreign land.*

**Keywords:** Identity, home, displacement, migration, belonging.

### Introduction

Leila Aboulela’s fictional characters are influenced by her own life because she herself has been to different cultures/places like Sudan, Egypt, Britain, Indonesia, Scotland, Qatar and the United Arab Emirates. Migration has been an important part of her life as Aboulela is the daughter of a Sudanese father and an Egyptian mother. Leila Aboulela was born in 1964, she is a Sudanese writer but currently based in Scotland and writes in English. Aboulela’s most recent works are the novel *Bird Summons* (2019) and the short-story collection *Elsewhere, Home* which was published in 2018 and became the winner of the 2018 Saltire Fiction Book of the Year Award. Aboulela is also the author of novel *The Translator* (1999),

a New York Times 100 Notable Books of the Year, *The Kindness of Enemies* published in 2015, *Minaret* published in 2005 and *Lyrics Alley* published in 2011. *Lyrics Alley* was Fiction Winner of the Scottish Book Awards and short-listed for a Regional Commonwealth Writers Prize. Leila was the first winner of the Caine Prize for African Writing. All three novels namely *The Kindness of Enemies*, *Minaret*, and *Lyrics Alley* were long-listed for the Orange Prize and the IMPAC Dublin Award.

The entire human history is full of events that at some point changed the complete course of history. 9/11 attacks and the subsequent “war on terror” is also one such event of human history. These events

not only affected the political and the government system but also the social life, literature and art. Literature could not remain immune and this event led to a growth of significant literary activities throughout the globe that revolves around this event. Laila Aboulela also got influenced by this event and made this event an important theme of her writings. The present paper tries to understand the themes of migration, displacement and the meaning of belonging to a place with reference to the short story collection *Elsewhere, Home* written by Leila Aboulela.

*Elsewhere, Home* is a longing for home, it is a collection of 13 short stories; this collection brings together Leila Aboulela's earliest short stories from 1990s to her latest fiction. *Elsewhere, Home* is an observation and exploration of connections, disconnections, generations, places, cultures and traditions across boundaries.

The first story in this collection is a story titled "Summer Maze" it follows the story of an English teenage girl Nadia and her mother Lateefa who is of an Egyptian origin. It tells the story of their yearly visits to Cairo from London to spend Nadia's summer vacations. Every year Nadia and Lateefa visit Cairo to spend the vacations with Lateefa's elder sister Salwa. Salwa has a son Khalid, Lateefa always used to dream that she will get Nadia married to Khalid but her dreams get shattered when she comes to know that Khalid is already in love with a girl named Reem and Salwa is happy for the choice her son has made. Nadia is also comfortable with Khalid marrying to Reem as she never wanted to marry Khalid or settle down in Cairo.

Aboulela tells the story first from Nadia's perspective and then from her mother Lateefa's point of view. Nadia does not enjoy these visits because she wants to spend her summer vacations back at home

London with her friends, but every year she makes these visits to Cairo for her mother. "Nadia's life was a zigzag of these annual visits that sometimes stretched into every single day of the holidays and made the September return to school feel abrupt and unfocused" (Aboulela 4).

Identity is a term that deals with the relationship of an individual with the society the individual lives in. "The notion of the Self is the consciousness of one's own identity" (Burke and Stets 9), this very idea of self and identity get complicated when one is displaced into a foreign land. According to M. Castells identity is "the people's source of meaning and experience" (6). Our identity gives us a sense of belonging to a particular group, culture and tradition, as Kath Woodward states that "Identity provides a link between individuals and the world in which they live. Identity combines how I see myself and how others see me. Identity involves the subjective, and the external. It is a socially recognized position, recognized by others, not just by me" (Castells 7). Since identity is very much connected with the society it becomes very difficult to deal and define it when one migrates into a new society. Thus identity remains one of the most important aspects of an individual's life and this concept of identity is questioned and doubted every time when one moves into another land.

When people belonging to a specific culture, history, tradition and nation leave their home and migrate to a new place and build a new home a sense of loss always follows them because the new world treats them as the other. In a new place they always think and imagine their homeland and this imagination is called the "third space" in the words of Homi K. Bhabha. In *The Location of Culture*, Homi K. Bhabha describes the concept of otherness as "an articulation of difference contained within the fantasy of origin and identity" (67) because this social, cultural and racial otherness makes the migrant subject feel

alienated and displaced in the new world the person has moved in. Aboulela also questions the exclusion of Muslim migrants who have willingly accepted the cosmopolitan society of the English world.

As Bhabha asserts the dispersal / 'scattering' of people in exiled spaces call for a 'gathering', and only from these gatherings 'emerge a historical fact of singular importance'(139). Aboulela focuses on one such gathering which resulted after the 9/11 attacks as the Muslims were segregated on the basis of religious, social and cultural differences irrespective of the number of years they have been staying in Britain or US. These people felt a sudden shock of identity crisis as they were reduced to mere Muslim stereotypes and the way they were labelled, because this labelling affected their identity in a very negative way. In the same way Sammar one of the major characters of Aboulala's 1999 novel *The Translator* gives expression to her frustration with labels as Sammar articulates her feelings by saying "In this country [England] everything was labelled, everything had a name" (Aboulela 4).

Aboulela throws light on the fact how these attacks played an important role in the construction of a colonial discourse and promoted an American nationalistic rhetoric which did not include any of the Muslims who have been staying in U.S since years. The Muslims who considered themselves as a part of U.S were suddenly seen as the other/foreigner. One can refer to David Richards and Shirley Chew here as they explain how traumatically regimes/colonizers react to people, as they try to corner them in the narrow angle of "otherness" by "substantiating a society's 'corporeal schema' with an image of alienation and domination where (the regime/colonizer) looks at the world and sees only a reflection of an imperial power" (Richards 11).

David Richards and Shirley Chew further raise a question on the fact how regimes and colonial powers operate to prevent the formation of any "workable forms of social and cultural life" by merely imposing new models and ways of "psychological dependence" that target the lives of people with more domination and making them feel more inferior(11). In the same way Muslims were targeted, they were questioned and they were made to feel inferior, barbaric and uncivilised. Aboulela gives this feeling words in her novel *Minaret* published in 2005 as she writes: "as Muslims our self-esteem is so low that we are desperate for approval and what greater stamp of approval can there be than a white man's approval?" (Aboulela 159).

*Elsewhere, Home* explores the themes of home, longing, belonging, loss, alienation, assimilation and displacement that comes when one leaves one's own homeland to peruse a new life in a new world. Lela Aboulela gives voice to all those who by their own choice or by force leave one's own homeland and navigate between two worlds and two identities. As Avtar Brah also argues that "the question is not simply about who travels, but when, how, and under what circumstances?" (Brah, 182). Because after leaving one's own homeland one is always desperately in need of a language to articulate the meaning of home and belonging and also the impact of being in another land has on a person's self identity because within the person is constantly in a dilemma of belonging as the person is not sure whether he belongs to this place or to that place.

One feels that one belongs to both the places but the reality turns out to be bitter as one realises that one is not welcomed in either place. The country they migrate to always considers them outsiders and the people of their homeland start believing that they are no more a part of their homeland. The migrants adapt the new culture as well as they try to preserve their



own culture but this further complicates their lives as no one understands the emotional trauma they go through in this process. They try to adjust into both the worlds but it becomes difficult for them as they start leading a complex life. They try to fit in both the worlds but they are considered unfit everywhere.

The short story "Summer Maze" also questions the existence of a migrant who is constantly having a dilemma of being half this and half that, living half here and half there and is not accepted fully anywhere. For example Nadia and Lateefa they both have a very confused idea of home. Avtar Brah questions the very idea of home as she writes: "where is home? On the one hand, 'home' is a mythic place of desire in the diasporic imagination. In this sense, it is a place of no return, even if it is possible to visit the geographical territory that is seen as the place of 'origin'. On the other hand, home is also the lived experience of locality, its sounds and smells" (Brah 192).

In this short story Aboulela beautifully captures the complexities of having multiple identities at the same time, the feeling of belonging to two or more places yet not getting accepted anywhere, the terrible feeling of adapting into a new culture yet also trying to preserve one's own culture, for example the following lines, "in Cairo, she was a stranger, but a stranger who went unnoticed, who was not tricked into paying extra for taxi rides and souvenirs. The effect was like a disguise, a role she was playing in an over world which did not demand from her much skill or strategy. She could not really think of herself as Egyptian, nor did she want to" (Aboulela 5).

Nadia does not want to be called an Egyptian because she considers London as her home and she believes that she belongs to London not to Egypt. But her dreams are shattered when she goes for sightseeing with her cousin Khalid and his fiancé Reem and overhears a British couple. "The

accent made Nadia homesick for London. She moved towards the couple, drawn to their familiar tones, eager for a flicker of recognition, an encouragement to say hello. But when they looked up at her they saw someone different from them, an Egyptian girl at the foot of that large pyramid in Giza. Nadia forced herself to speak out because she needed this encounter now, needed to make this link" (Aboulela 12). She makes an effort and talks to them, because she wants to prove her identity, for her this becomes a moment of self assertion and claiming one's identity.

These immigrants are always conscious of the different worlds they are living in, though Nadia considers herself to be a British but at the same time she is also conscious of the fact that "the English couple were Londoners like her; she could speak their language and warm to their moods. But she was not a tourist and for her Egypt could never be a holiday destination like Jordan or Greece. Desert, pyramids and sphinx were embedded in her DNA. They were her heritage whether she wanted it or not" (Aboulela 12).

In *Citizenship, Identity and the Politics of Multiculturalism: The Rise of Muslim Consciousness*, Nasar Meer also raises the same issue. Meer centres his argument on the different ways British Muslims seek to get a recognition and acknowledgment in a society which is treating them as the other but they consider themselves an important part of that society. They find it very shattering when their loyalties are questioned and suspected. Nadia wants to be accepted she wants to be known, she is this she does not want to be seen as that. She wants to be known as someone who she really is from inside not as someone who she looks like from outside. She wants to tell everyone that no matter she looks like an Egyptian but she is a Londoner like this British couple. She succeeds in having a brief conversation with the British couple and after that "she

walks back to Reem and Khalid feeling refreshed" (Aboulela 12).

Nadia and her mother is now an outsider in the country of their origin that is Egypt but the irony is they are considered an outsider in London as well and this becomes a major problem for them. Through this short story Aboulela makes her readers visit Egypt she also shows the readers a glimpse of Egyptian culture, she focuses on the minor details like the huge number of luggage the Egyptians carry with them wherever they travel, for example one passage in the short story goes as "the next challenge taken up by the flight crew was to find enough storage space for the hand baggage of the Egyptian passengers" (Aboulela 4). Once Nadia asks her mother "why do people in Egypt lie all the time? When Tante Salwa (her aunt whom they pay these yearly visits) has visitors why does she always tell them to stay longer when they get up to leave? She does not mean it, she wants them to go and she is relieved when they go" (Aboulela 13). One can also take into consideration the following passage "the aversion to cousins marrying is something the English taught her, something a girl brought up in Egypt would not feel" (Aboulela 18). "These were the Egyptian complexities Nadia would never appreciate" (Aboulela 13).

Nadia and her mother, both are homeless and displaced into their homeland as well as in the foreign land. They have many identities but not a single identity accepts them. Where are you from? This question haunts both of them as Amit Saha mentions that "displacement introduces dynamism between past and the present and identities have to be defined continuously" (7).

The mother and the daughter both are torn between two identities and two homes. In front of the British couple it becomes necessary for Nadia to assert her identity and establish her personal presence, in the same way Lateefa also becomes a victim

of identity crisis. She leaves Egypt to settle down in London and in the process of adjusting into an unfamiliar world she loses connections with her origin. As her sister Salwa tells her "by going away you have become more old fashioned. Things here are not as conventional and innocent as in your youth. Lateefa you are lagging behind. It is as, if by being away, time stood still for you" (Aboulela 17). It becomes a terrible feeling for the migrant subject because one leaves home in search of a fortunate future but in this process loses connections with ones past and ones people. Migration is not very simple and easy, one has to pay a huge price in this process. Here one can also think of the novel *Funny Boy* written by Shyam Selvadurai wherein the protagonist of the novel Arjie articulates his feelings when they had no option but to move to Canada and leave Sri Lanka as the entire Tamil community living in Sri Lanka was attacked and targeted by the Sinhala community, Arjie says that "we are going, not with the idea that something delightful awaits us, but rather with the knowledge that great difficulties lie ahead. I find it impossible to imagine our world will ever be normal again" (Selvadurai, 309). Lateefa's elder sister's remark further complicates her already complicated life as she says to herself "Salwa cannot understand the fears that haunt a Muslim woman bringing up children in the West" (Aboulela 16).

This paper also tries to understand her approach towards the most common problems like stereotyping Muslims and their culture as all Muslims were made to feel insecure after the 9/11 attacks and their loyalties were questioned and their identity was doubted. In this short story Aboulela also throws light on the experience of being a part of both Muslim and non Muslim societies. In the present short story Aboulela also mentions briefly about the Islamic faith but her narrative is very different from the typical clichéd

narrative of an Islamic society. Through the character of Salwa, Aboulela is trying to represent a progressive Muslim society as Salwa who has always been in Cairo informs her younger sister Lateefa who is now a resident of London that “things have changed and young people make their own choices nowadays. Khalid and Reem are in love and want to be together. How can I stand in his way?” (Aboulela).

As R. Radhakrishnan believes in finding the “Indian-ness within” being in Diaspora in the same way Leila Aboulela’s characters look inward to understand their identity being excluded in the English world. *Elsewhere, Home* makes its reader to question the concept of home whether a home is a feeling, or a very deep emotion or a state of being. For her a home is a place where one feels a complete sense of belonging, where one is never asked or expected to justify one’s own presence, where one may be taken for granted but is never made to feel inferior, a place which gives one agency, freedom of speech, safety, respect and love. Laila Aboulela also questions the concept of self and the other and she encourages her readers to explore the ways in which our all cultural, political, social, historical, religious differences can be merged in order to create a human society which believes in justice, equality, love and peace.

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## Nutritional Status of Adult Girls from Urban and Urban Slum Area of Jamnagar City

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### ABSTRACT:

*Balanced meal is important for the growth, development and better health in adults. Nutritional wellbeing is possible only when there is balance between nutrient intake and nutritional requirements. Dietary practices of adolescents affect number of health problems, including undernutrition and obesity. The research study was carried out to assess the nutritional status of college adult girls of urban area and non college adult girls of urban slum area in Jamnagar city.*

*Prevalence of undernutrition in pretest was observed much more among college adult girls of urban area and among non college adult girls of urban slum area compared to overweight and obesity among college adult girls of urban area and non college adult girls of urban slum area in Jamnagar city.*

**Keywords** : Nutritional status, college adult girls, non college adult girls, urban area, urban slum area

### Introduction:

Adolescents and adult girls are vulnerable to the effects of malnutrition. The adult girls of urban and urban slum area are subjected to more physical and mental challenges due to increasing pressure of studies, work and modernization as they need to cope with the future demands of life.

Physical and psychological pressures affect their eating habits. Dietary practices of adult girls affect health problems which include undernutrition and obesity. Poor general nutrition or deficiencies in specific nutrients increase the risk of infection. Undernutrition and malnourished girls are more likely to remain undernourished during adolescence and adulthood. Malnourished women are more likely to deliver low birth weight babies. Obesity is also a major health problem in developed and emerging health problem in developing nation like India.

Body mass index is a simple index of weight for height that is commonly used to classify underweight, overweight and obesity in adults. BMI values are age independent and same for both sexes. BMI is associated with various factors such as diet, ethnic group and activity level. Due to lack of nutritional knowledge adult girls are unable to make correct choices of food. Thus this comparative study of nutritional status of college adult girls of urban area and non college adult

### Objective :

- To study the nutritional status of college adult girls of urban area and non college adult girls of urban slum area in Jamnagar city
- To give nutrition education about dietary knowledge to college adult girls of urban and non college adult

girls of urban slum area in Jamnagar city

### Review of literature:

Some related researches were reviewed for the study.

Deepika Anand and Anuradha R.K. (2016) in a study reports that nearly 50% of adolescent girls aged between 15-19 years are underweight in India (UNICEF, 2012) with a body mass index of less than 18.5 such undernutrition renders adolescents vulnerable to disease and early death and has lifelong health consequences.

Sakamaki R, Toyama K, Amamoto R, Liu CJ, Shinfuku N (2005) in a study reveals that 80.5% of medical students of 19-24 years age had normal BMI and 16.6 % were underweight. Prevalence of BMI >30 obesity was less observed. In the study the researcher found that 62% of young female Chinese students had a desire to be thinner than 47.4% of male.

Shravan Kumar, Amrita NS, M. Sreedhar (2014) in their study reveals that 48.5% 10-18 years of adolescent girls were found underweight and 21.5% were obese. The need for health education and nutritional intervention was needed.

### Methodology:

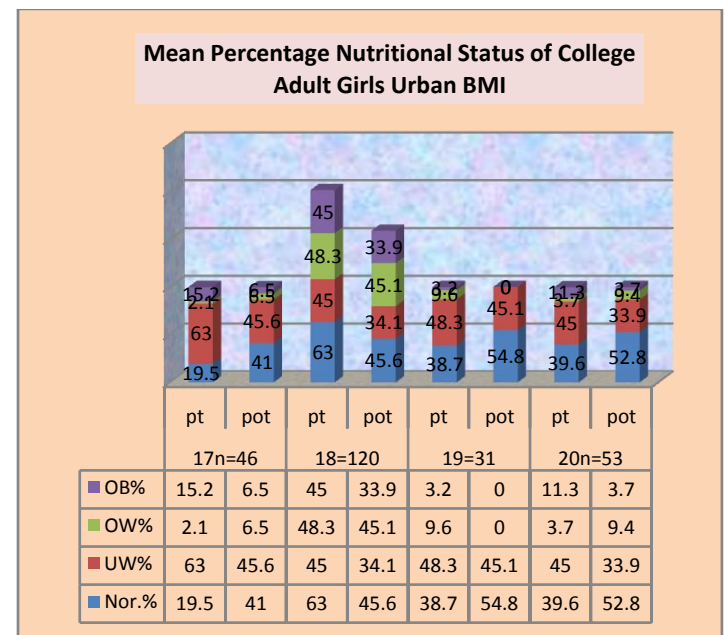
The research study was carried out by random sampling method. Questionnaire was prepared for getting the data of weight, height and BMI was calculated. The study was done on a sample of 500 adult girls in the age group of 17 to 20 years in Jamnagar city. 17 year old girls were considered as adolescents. The sample were grouped as 250 college adult girls of urban area and 250 non college adult girls of urban slum area in Jamnagar city.

### Data collection:

Data collection was done by taking anthropometric measurements of adult girls. Body mass index was calculated by the formula –BMI=  $\text{weight(kg)} / \text{height (m)}^2$

### Result and Discussion:

A total of 500 adult girls of 17 to 20 years of college adult girls of urban area and urban slum area in Jamnagar city were studied. They were grouped as 250 college adult girls of urban area and 250 non college adult girls of urban slum area in Jamnagar city. Figure 1 shows the mean percentage of nutritional status of college adult girls of urban area.



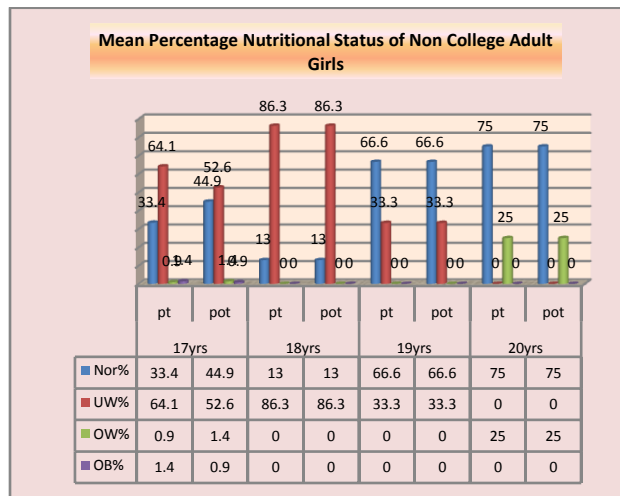
**Figure 1 Mean Percentage of Nutritional Status of College Adult Girls Urban Area (BMI)**

Key: pt=pretest, pot=post test, Nor.=normal, UW=underweight, OW=overweight, OB=obesity

In figure 1 data shows that amongst college adult girls of urban area in Jamnagar city 63% of 17 years were underweight during pretest and 19.5% were normal whereas 2.1% were overweight and 15.2% were

obese. In the post test after following the diet plan it was observed that 41% were normal and only 6.5% college adult girls were obese. Amongst 18 years of adult girls in the pretest 45% were underweight, 63% were normal, 48.3% were overweight and 45% were obese. Amongst 19 years of college adult girls in the pretest 48.3% were underweight and 38.7% were normal whereas 9.6% were overweight and 3.2 were obese, upon following the diet plan post test showed that 54.8% were normal, 45.1% were underweight and none of the adult girls were obese. Amongst 20 years of college adult girls in the pretest 45% were underweight, 39.6 % were normal whereas 3.7% were overweight and 11.3% were obese. Post test showed that 52.8% were normal and only 3.7% were obese. When the college adult girls of urban area followed diet plan along with the change in lifestyle it was observed that in the post test they had normal BMI.

The data in figure 2 shows the mean percentage nutritional status of non college adult girls.



**Figure 2 Mean Percentage of Nutritional Status of NonCollege Adult Girls Urban Slum Area (BMI)**

figure 2, shows that in pre test of non college adult girls of 17 years 33.4% were

normal, 64.1% were underweight, 0.9% were overweight and 1.4 % were obese. By following the diet plan and changing their lifestyle the post test showed that 44.9 % were normal, 52.6 % were underweight and only 1.4 % were overweight and 0.9 % were obese. Amongst 18 years of adult girls in pre test and in post test 13 % were normal, 86.3 % were underweight. Amongst 19 years of non college adult girls 66.6 % were normal 33.3 % were underweight. Post test showed no changes in their nutritional status the reason being unawareness of nutritional knowledge, work schedule and ignorance. Amongst 20 years of the adult girls in pre test and post test 75 % were normal and 25 % were overweight.

### Conclusion:

Prevalence of undernutrition was more compared to overweight and obesity among 17 to 20 years of college adult girls of urban area and non college adult girls of urban slum area in Jamnagar city. After nutrition education and bringing awareness among adult girls in the post test adult girls followed suggested diet and nutritional status improved.

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## Effect of Integrated Curriculum on Micro Thinking Skill of Elementary School Students

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### ABSTRACT

*The present paper focuses on the effectiveness of the integrated curriculum. The paper investigates the effectiveness of the integrated curriculum on micro thinking skills of the students of standard 3. Another objective of the paper was to modify the integrated curriculum. The integrated curriculum was developed by Children's University. To know the effectiveness one group pretest-posttest experimental design was implemented. To suggest a correction to the integrated curriculum the content analysis has been done. For the implementation of the program one school was selected by the purposive sampling technique. The cluster standard 3rd of the selected school was selected as a sample. First of all, the pretest was given to the student and after that program was implemented. After that again the posttest was administered. Data was analyzed and the effectiveness of the program was derived. The result shows that the program was effective for the enhancement of micro thinking skills. The program was effective on higher order and lower order micro thinking skills. The program was effective regardless of students' gender, educational achievement, socioeconomic status, their parents' education. The results of the content analysis suggest that the program has more emphasis on two skills: remembering and analyzing. At the end of this study, the effectiveness of the integrated program was established and some suggestions for the improvement in the program were collected.*

**Keywords:-**Integrated Curriculum, Micro Thinking skills

### 1. Introduction

Education is the process of molding character and behavior of human being. It brings out inherent competences of a child. Education gives the power of distinguishing between good and bad, right and wrong, true and false (*Satya* and *Astaya*) and *dharma* and *adharma*. It distinguishes mankind from other living objects. Education leads to self-realization. It gives freedom (*mukti*) from all kind of *Bandhan*. Education teaches the true meaning of life. It is a lifelong process. Human being learns throughout life with experiences of life.

ज्ञानमनुद्विविधंप्रोक्तंशाब्दिकंप्रथमंस्मृतं

अनुभवाख्यंद्वितीयंतुज्ञानंतदुर्लभंनृप॥

It shouldn't be in form of three R i.e. Reading, writing and arithmetic but it should be of three H i.e. hand, heart and head.

There are certain curriculums, textbooks; materials etc. but these entire things have not any connection with life. The fractions of knowledge acquired from the current education system haven't any relation to the multitudes of life's experiences. For the holistic development of the child, all the discipline should be connected with each other. To lighten some of the bits, Children's



University has developed integrated learning material. The vision behind integrated teaching and learning is that when subjects, disciplines, tasks or activities are combined, a child begins to see a meaningful connection between different subjects and perceives the information, served by various subjects, as a wholesome knowledge. By integrated curriculum, education can be a vehicle for better life and holistic development. Present education system emphasizes merely on the development of the memory skill where holistic development means the development of some other type of skills too. The present paper attempts to trace down the effect of an integrated curriculum on some mental skills.

## **2. Integrated curriculum**

An integrated curriculum has its root in the 20th century. In 1991 Beane said that disciplines were created in an attempt to organize the world around them (Beane 1991). It means that it is not an integration of fractions of subjects. In progressive era reforms in traditional education system started. During this era education emphasizes on creativity, applicable outcomes, natural learning and student experiences (Grosvenor, I., Lawn, M., & Rousmaniere, 1999). The investigation in traditional education system gave new ways of thinking about how student learn. The ways to reform education system prepared the base for integrated curriculum. The educationalist believed that different disciplines prevented students from making connections between the different subjects. Because of it, the relevance of the material diminished. Thus the attempt of crossing boundary of subjects results in the creation of an integrated curriculum. In India, no such attempt has been made by any regularizing body or Government. Children's University has done this type of attempt and constructs integrated curriculum. Hon. Vice Chancellor, Prof. K. S. Likhia gave the idea of integration. He guided the University teachers during the task. As a result of this exercise an integrated

curriculum has been developed by the Children's University. The components of the integrated curriculum are as follows:

### **2.1 Components of Integrated Curriculum developed by Children's University**

- Major Focus on basic micro level thinking skills
- Emphasis on *Panchkoshatmak* development
- Emphasis on real-life oriented, lifelong learning
- Interlinked subjects in each and every task.
- Promotion of thinking and not memory
- Value and cultural education
- Promotes Cooperative learning, Self-learning, Peer group learning, Social learning theory, intrinsic motivation, reflective thinking

### **3. Micro thinking Skills**

For the present study thinking skill were identified before starting the study. As per Berry & Beyer, Benjamin Bloom and his colleagues has developed best list of micro thinking skills which are important in day to day teaching. (Berry & Beyer). For the present study micro thinking skills developed by Benjamin Blooms with Max Englehart and David Krathwohl were taken as micro thinking skills. They published a framework for categorizing educational goals: Taxonomy of Educational Objectives. This framework has been applied by generations of K-12 teachers and college instructors in their teaching. As this study is on the students of standard 3rd it is found proper to consider micro thinking skills given by Bloom for this paper.

Bloom has given six major categories of thinking skills:- Knowledge, Comprehension, Application, Analysis, Synthesis, and Evaluation.

From the Handbook one ( page no 201 to 207) the brief explanations of these main categories are as below.

- Knowledge “involves the recall of specifics and universals, the recall of methods and processes, or the recall of a pattern, structure, or setting.”
- Comprehension is “a type of understanding or apprehension such that the individual knows what is being communicated and can make use of the material or idea being communicated without necessarily relating it to other material or seeing its fullest implications.”
- Application represents the “use of abstractions in particular and concrete situations.”
- Analysis refers to the “breakdown of a communication into its constituent elements or parts such that the relative hierarchy of ideas is made clear and/or the relations between ideas expressed are made explicit.”
- Synthesis includes the “putting together of elements and parts so as to form a whole.”
- Evaluation involves the “judgments about the value of material and methods for given purposes.”

In 2001 cognitive psychologist and other researchers revised Blooms taxonomy. They gave the six categories in the form of action words which are as follows.

- Remember
- Understand
- Apply
- Analyze
- Evaluate
- Create

In the present study revised taxonomy of the Bloom was used to analyze and test micro thinking skills of students of standard 3rd.

#### 4. Research review

As a part of innovations in education, the integrated curriculum has surfaced as a competent tool of holistic development. The main aim of the integrated curriculum is to

simplify the learning process. The theory behind the integrated approach is that when subjects are combined, learners can make a connection between different disciplines. Integrated curriculum creates an opportunity for more meaningful, life oriented and lifelong learning of different subjects. The curriculum supports an assumption that learning through direct experiences is important for meaningful learning. The integrated curriculum supports Bandura’s Social learning theory and cooperative learning (Ormrod, 1999). Researchers showed the effectiveness of cooperative learning.

The main base of the integrated curriculum is on the fact that meaningful learning occurred when student experience is essential in the teaching-learning process. As per Vars (1991), the integrated curriculum can empower students, parents, and teachers (Vars, 1991), but the current education system lays emphasis on fractions of knowledge. Students learn each area of subject separately, knowledge is disconnected and the connection of acquired knowledge with life found nowhere. Progressives were against the traditional education system where children are treated as if they were some objects. They believed that school learning of the education system was different from the real world hence, very often, an average child might feel difficulty in comprehending it (Ellis & Fouts 1997). Such assumption about the education system became the base for integrated curricular efforts.

As per Karri, students have to discover the connection between the different subjects they read (Karri Holley, 2017). They think over the material and interpret it and draw some conclusion with the help of different strategies, experiments with material, previous knowledge etc. As an example if students see a wrapper of some product they learn a language on the wrapper, price (Maths), ingredients (science) and so many things. They also think about cost price if they

want to sell the product. The integrated curriculum makes students alert about the connection of content area. It provides students with a more responsive learning environment to social needs.

As per research of Perkins, interdisciplinary teaching motivates Students. More connected experiences enhance motivation and achievement of students (Perkins,1996).

Integrated curriculum developed by Children's University focuses on the concept rather than content. In 2000 Guthrie has developed concept-oriented reading instructions. He integrated language, arts, reading and science. He found that students who take the CORI are more curious than the students who had taken the traditional method of learning(Guthrie, 2000). The researches show that integrated curriculum makes a connection between different content areas, motivate students, connect content with life, and develop students socially. On the basis of the above results, the university has developed an integrated curriculum. The present paper investigates the effect of integrated learning material on micro thinking skills of the students.

### **5. Objective of the study:-**

1. To study the effect of integrated learning program on the Micro Thinking skills.
2. To study the effect of integrated learning program on the Micro Thinking skills in relation to the gender of students.
3. To study the effect of integrated learning program on the Micro Thinking skills in relation to the social economic status of the students.
4. To study the effect of integrated learning program on the Micro Thinking skills in relation to their parent's education.
5. To study the effect of integrated learning program on the Micro Thinking skills in relation to their educational achievement.

### **6. Variable of the study:**

#### **Independent Variable: -**

1. Integrated Learning Program

2. Secondary Independent Variables

(1) Gender :- (i) Male (ii) Female

(2) Economic Status: - (i) Low (ii)

High

(3) Educational Qualification of

Parents: - (i) Less than SSC (ii) More than

SSC

(4) Educational Achievement: - (i)

High (ii) Low

**Dependent Variable:-**Micro Thinking Skill

#### **Intervening Variable:-**

Individual differences between students like Interest, Curiosity etc..

### **7. Hypothesis of the Study:-**

**H01** There will be no significant difference between the mean score on micro thinking skills pretest and posttest of students of the experimental group.

**H02** There will be no significant difference between the mean score on higher order thinking skill pretest and posttest of students of the experimental group.

**H03** There will be no significant difference between the mean score on lower order thinking skill pretest and posttest of students of the experimental group.

**H04** There will be no significant difference between the mean score on micro thinking skills posttest of girls and boys of the experimental group.

**H05** There will be no significant difference between the mean score on micro thinking skills posttest of students from low economic status and high economic status of the experimental group.

**H06** There will be no significant difference between the mean score on micro thinking skills posttest of the students whose parents have higher education qualification and the students whose parents have lower education qualification of the experimental group.

**H07** There will be no significant difference between the mean score on micro thinking skills posttest of the students with high achievement and low achievement of the experimental group.

## 8. Population

The main objective of the present study was to study the effectiveness of an integrated learning program constructed by Children's University. To implement the program students of standard 3rd of Government Primary schools were selected as a population for the study.

## 9. Sample

For the selection of the sample, the purposive sample technique was used. The present study was an experimental study. To implement the experiment, permission of the school and some necessary facilities were essential. Keeping in the mind the above said purposes Government primary school of sector 20/1 was selected as a sample. All the students of class 3 of 20/1 government primary school were the sample of the study. There were 30 students studying in the year of 2016-17 were selected as a sample.

## 10. Tool

In the present study, the researcher was keen to study the effect of the integrated learning program

For the present research, a test was constructed to measure micro thinking skills of the students. The tool was constructed by the researcher. Reliability and validity of the tools were not established.

The main tool of the study was an integrated learning program. The program was developed by Children's University. There were 5 chapters in the program. Total 145 activities were developed on the basis of different micro thinking skills and domains of knowledge given by Bloom.

## 11. Method of the study

Children's University had constructed an integrated learning program for standard 3. The program was constructed for helping students to make connections across curricula. The program is designed in a way so that it connects skills and knowledge from multiple sources and experiences. Students can apply skills in day to day life; utilize diverse and even contradictory points of view; and, understand issues and can position contextually. The integrated curriculum developed by Children's University prominences on 6 types of mental skills: Remember, Understand, Application, Analysis, Evaluation, and Creation.

The main objectives of the study To study the effect of integrated learning program on the levels of micro thinking skills.

For the objective systematic process was followed. One group pre-test post-test experimental design was selected for the implementation of the study.

First of all for the implementation of the program, systematic lesson plans were prepared. To know the effect of pre-test containing items regarding micro thinking skills were constructed. First of all, a pre-test was implemented after that, the program was implemented as per the lesson plan. After the

implementation of the program again post-test was implemented to know the effect of the program. The research scholar of the Children's University, Mrs. Hetal Patel went for implementation of the program. Data were analyzed with Mann Whitney U test. Results of data analyses are given below.

## 12. Hypothesis Testing

To reach to the objective of the study hypothesis were formulated. Testing of hypothesis is given below.

**Ho1 There will be no significant difference between mean score on micro thinking skills pretest and post test of students of experimental group.**

**Table 1**

Statistics regarding mean score on micro thinking skills pretest and post test of students of experimental group

Test	Sum of ranks	Mean of ranks	U-value	U-value	Z Value	Significant
Post Test	385	8.94	7	7	-4.54	Significant
Pre test	143	24.06	249			

From above table it is shown that sum of ranks for post test is 385 and for pre test is 143. Mean ranks for post test is 8.94 and for pre test is 24.06. U value for post test is 7 and for pre test is 249. The smallest value is 7. Thus value of U for this hypothesis testing is 7. The value of Z is -4.541 which is significant at 0.05 level of significance. From the result it is revealed that null hypothesis is rejected. It means that difference is significant. From the data it is clear that the mean score of post test is higher than mean score of pre test.

**Ho2 There will be no significant difference between mean score on higher order thinking skill pretest**

**and post test of students of experimental group.**

**Table 2**

Statistics regarding mean score on higher order thinking skills pretest and post test of students of experimental group

Higher order thinking skills	Sum of ranks	Mean of ranks	U-value	U-value	Z Value	Significant
Post Test	382	23.88	10	10	-4.4	Significant
Pre test	146	9.12	246			

From above table it is shown that sum of ranks for higher order thinking skills post test is 382 and for pre test is 146. Mean ranks for post test is 23.88 and for pre test is 9.12. U value for post test is 10 and for pre test is 246. The smallest value is 10. Thus value of U for this hypothesis testing is 10. The value of Z is -4.428 which is significant at 0.05 level of significance. From the result it is revealed that null hypothesis is rejected. It means that difference is significant. From the data it is clear that the mean score of post test is higher than mean score of pre test.

**Ho3 There will be no significant difference between mean score on lower order thinking skill pretest and post test of students of experimental group.**

For the testing of the Ho4 hypothesis Mann Whitney U test has been calculated. The statistics regarding the test is given below.

**Table 3**

Statistics regarding mean score on lower order thinking skills pretest and post test of students of experimental group

Lower order thinking	Sum of ranks	Mean of ranks	U-value	U-value	Z Value	Significant
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skills						
Post Test	378	23.62	14	14	-4.27	Significant
Pre test	150	9.38	24			

From above table it is shown that sum of ranks for lower order thinking skill post test is 378 and for pre test is 150. Mean ranks for post test is 23.62 and for pre test is 9.38. U value for post test is 14 and for pre test is 242. The smallest value is 14. Thus value of U for this hypothesis testing is 14. The value of Z is -4.278 which is significant at 0.05 level of significance. From the result it is revealed that null hypothesis is rejected. It means that difference is significant. From the data it is clear that the mean score of post test is higher than mean score of pre test.

**H04 There will be no significant difference between mean score on micro thinking skills post test of girls and boys of experimental group.**

For the testing of the H04 hypothesis Mann Whitney U test has been calculated. The statistics regarding the test is given below.

**Table 4**

Statistics regarding mean score on micro thinking skills post test of boys and girls of experimental group

Category	Sum of ranks	Mean of ranks	U-value	U-value	Z Value	Significant
Boys	77	8.56	31	31	-0.05	Not Significant
Girls	59	8.43	32			

From above table, it reveals that sum of ranks for post test of boys and girls are 77 and 59 respectively. Mean ranks for post test of boys and girls is 8.56 and 8.43 respectively. U value for boys is 31 and for girls 32. The smallest value is 31. Thus value of U for this hypothesis testing is 31. The value of Z is -0.053 which is not significant at 0.05 level of significance. From the result it is

revealed that null hypothesis is not rejected. It means that difference is not significant. The mean score of post test of girls and boys is not significantly different.

**H05 There will be no significant difference between mean score on micro thinking skills post test of students from low economic status and high economic status of experimental group.**

**Table 5**

Statistics regarding mean score on micro thinking skills post test of students from low economic status and high economic status of experimental group.

Economic Status	Sum of ranks	Mean of ranks	U-value	U-value	Z Value	Significant
High	80.5	8.94	27.5	27.5	0.37	Not Significant
Low	55.5	7.93	35.5			

From above table, it reveals that sum of ranks for post test of students from High Educational Status and students from Low Economic Status is 80.5 and 55.5 respectively. Mean ranks for post test of students from High Educational Status and students from Low Economic Status is 8.94 and 7.93 respectively. U value for High Economic Status is 27.5, and for Low Economic Status is 35.5. The smallest value is 27.5. Thus value of U for this hypothesis testing is 27.5. The value of Z is 0.370 which is not significant at 0.05 level of significance. From the result it is revealed that null hypothesis is not rejected. It means that difference is not significant. The mean score of post test of students from High Educational Status and students from Low Economic Status is not significantly different.

**H06 There will be no significant difference between mean score on micro thinking**

**skills post test of the students whose parents have higher education qualification and the students whose parents have lower education qualification of experimental group.**

**Table 6**

Statistics regarding mean score on micro thinking skills post test of the students whose parents have higher education qualification and the students whose parents have lower education qualification of experimental group

Parent's Education	Sum of ranks	Mean of ranks	U-value	U-value	Z Value	Significant
High	65.5	10.92	15.5	15.5	-1.51	Not Significant
Low	70.5	7.05	45.5			

From above table it is shown that sum of ranks for post test of students whose parents have higher education qualification and the students whose parents have lower education qualification is 65.5 and 70.5 respectively. Mean ranks for post test of students whose parents have higher education qualification and the students whose parents have lower education qualification is 10.92 and 7.05 respectively. U value for students whose parents have higher education qualification is 15.5 and the students whose parents have lower education qualification is 45.5. The smallest value is 15.5. Thus value of U for this hypothesis testing is 15.5. The value of Z is -1.519 which is not significant at 0.05 level of significance. From the result it is revealed that null hypothesis is not rejected. It means that difference is not significant. The mean score of post test of students whose parents have higher education qualification and the students whose parents have lower education qualification is not significantly different.

**H07 There will be no significant difference between mean score on micro thinking skills post test of the students with high**

**achievement and low achievement of experimental group.**

**Table 7**

Statistics regarding mean score on micro thinking skills post test of the students with high achievement and low achievement of experimental group

Students Achievement	Sum of ranks	Mean of ranks	U-value	U-value	Z Value	Significant
High	73	9.12	27	27	0.47	Not Significant
Low	63	7.88	37			

From above table it is shown that sum of ranks for post test of students with high achievement and low achievement is 73 and 63 respectively. Mean ranks for post test of students with high achievement and low achievement is 9.12 and 7.88 respectively. U value for students with high achievement is 27 and low achievement is 37. The smallest value is 27. Thus value of U for this hypothesis testing is 27. The value of Z is 0.473 which is not significant at 0.05 level of significance. From the result it is revealed that null hypothesis is not rejected. It means that difference is not significant. The mean score of post test of students with high achievement and low achievement is not significantly different.

### **13. Finding of the study:-**

Significant difference was found between the mean score on pretest and posttest of students of the experimental group. It shows that integrated learning program was found effective for the development of micro thinking skill.

The significant difference was found between the mean score on higher order thinking skill pretest and posttest of students of the experimental group. The same result was found for lower order thinking skill. It proves that the program was found effective for the

enhancement of higher order as well as lower order thinking skills.

There was no significant difference between other levels' variables like boys and girls, students from low economic status and high economic status, students whose parents have lower education qualification and higher educational qualification.

There was no significant difference between mean score of the students with high achievement and low achievement, means program was found equally effective for each and every student simultaneously.

As per the result of content analysis it was found that program lays emphasis more on two skills; recalling and analysis than other skills.

#### 14. Conclusion

As the result of this study, Integrated learning Program was found effective for development and enhancement of micro thinking skills (both higher and lower order thinking skills) of standard 3rd students.

Integrated learning Program was found equally effective in relation to their educational achievement, parents' education and their socio economic status and gender for the development of thinking skills.

Some suggestions from the stakeholders were acquired during the study. At last the effective integrated learning program was found as a result of the study. Children's University can now implement the program in all Vidyaniketans as well as other schools of Gujarat State.

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