

# **The core has gone out; what's left is projection: The case of Indian education system**

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## **Abstract:**

This research study critically analyses the structural and cultural distortions that influence India's contemporary education system. The goal of this study is to look at how Indian education has moved away from its true goal of encouraging holistic learning and toward practices that are more focused on appearances than on substance. The study aims to redefine excellence by examining systemic distortions and suggesting value-centred alternatives, focusing on inclusivity, student-centred pedagogies, accountability, fair pay, and long-term trust, instead of limited achievement metrics. The study critically examines pressure-driven teaching methods, the commercialization of success, minimalist institutional models, and unequal pay and accountability all work together to make education less authentic. Each of these problems has potential solution that focuses on differentiated learning, empowering faculty, building trust with alumni, and balanced governance. These pathways indicate that education can be reinstated as a sacred and transformative discipline when institutions redirect their emphasis from superficial projection to genuine human development.

## **Introduction**

Education in India has always been seen as a sacred pursuit, deeply rooted in cultural values and spiritual beliefs. Education was once seen as the best way to improve oneself, from the ancient Gurukul system, where learning was holistic and life-oriented, to the Nalanda and Takshashila universities that drew people from all over the world (Upanishads, n.d.). People didn't just see knowledge (vidya) as information; they saw it as light that could help people realize their potential to live meaningful lives and help society as a whole. This philosophy viewed the teacher as a guide and mentor, the learner as a seeker, and the educational process as a collective expedition towards wisdom, virtue, and self-actualization.

Modern thinkers like Rabindranath Tagore and Mahatma Gandhi tried to bring this spirit back to life. Tagore saw education as a way to bring people and nature, creativity and discipline, and individuality and community together (Tagore & Radhakrishnan, 1918; Ahmed, 2019). Gandhi stressed Nai Talim, or Basic Education, which focused on self-reliance, the dignity of work, and moral growth (Gandhi, n.d.; Gupta, n.d.). Both leaders put the student at the centre of the process and fought against the idea that education is just for getting credentials or making money. Their values were similar to those of ancient India, which saw education as a way to free oneself and help others.

However, Indian education as it is now is very different from these basic values. Because of the pressures of global competition, mass enrolment, and the commercialization of credentials, the system is putting projection ahead of substance more and more. Both higher education and K-12 schools are stuck in cycles of showing off their performance, branding themselves in the market, and coming up with ways to save money that make learning less

authentic. What was once a promise to help the whole person is now in danger of becoming a way to sort, choose, and show off a select few.

This study identifies five interrelated problem areas that elucidate this transformation. Pressure-driven pedagogies are prevalent in schools and universities, that are suited more for the top 5–10% of rapid learners while neglecting the majority of students. At the same time, institutional excellence is shown through the selective commercialization of achievement, using a small group of top students to market the school instead of promoting real inclusivity. Alumni trust, which used to be a natural sign of how real an institution was, now depends on whether institutions can keep up their quality and well-being over time. Private schools are adopting a minimalist business model that puts saving money ahead of faculty dignity and academic standards. Lastly, when pay and accountability don't match up, it shows that any institution can't get great results by either paying people a lot of money without making them responsible or making them responsible without paying them fairly.

These distortions, when taken together, show that Indian education has lost touch with its true purpose. The system shows off its greatness with things like test scores, alumni, rankings, and branding, while hiding the fact that values, fairness, and inclusivity are all getting worse. By formulating these hypotheses, this study establishes itself not merely as a critique but as a summons for transformation. It contends that progress is achievable by reestablishing a connection with the Indian educational ethos characterized by inclusivity, reverence for educators, equitable accountability, and the comprehensive development of students. Such a reorientation necessitates more than mere reform; it calls for a cultural renaissance, wherein education is reinstated as a sacred endeavour aimed at human flourishing, rather than a credential-driven enterprise.

### **Need for the Study**

The necessity for this study stems from the increasing disparity between the principles of Indian education and its existing practices. Historically, Indian education prioritized holistic development, moral foundation, and inclusivity, regarding knowledge as a sacred endeavour for individual emancipation and societal harmony (Tagore & Radhakrishnan, 1918; Gandhi, n.d.). However, in today's fast-paced, globalizing, and market-driven world, educational institutions are more and more influenced by projection, which is measured by test scores, branding strategies, and selective displays of success, rather than by the real development of learning.

This disconnect is made clear by a number of systemic problems. First, the use of pressure-driven teaching models has led to a "winner-takes-all" culture, where only a small group of high achievers are recognized and the rest of the students are ignored. This not only makes things more unfair, but it also goes against the spirit of India's educational heritage, which is to include everyone. Second, the commoditization of achievement, where schools and universities use the successes of a few students to sell themselves, turns education into a competition and takes away its inherent value. Third, alumni trust is going down, which means that schools aren't building long-lasting relationships based on quality, care, and community. Fourth, the rise of a minimalist business model in private schools, which includes underpaid teachers, overworked staff, and lower academic standards, has made the teaching profession weaker. Teaching has always been seen as a noble and important job for the country's

progress. Finally, the mismatch between pay and accountability hurts institutional excellence. High pay without responsibility leads to complacency, while strict accountability without fair pay leads to burnout.

These problems show that we need to rethink what it means to be an excellent learner beyond just looking at test scores. If we don't do anything about it, the current path could lead to a generation of students who don't understand the deeper purposes of education and institutions that put making money ahead of serving the public. On the other hand, this study provides ways to restore authenticity by suggesting transformational alternatives like differentiated instruction, competency-based learning, balanced accountability, and value-driven governance.

Consequently, the study is essential not only as a diagnostic tool but also as a cultural intervention: to remind institutions, policymakers, and educators of the Indian ethos of learning, and to suggest tangible frameworks for aligning practice with purpose. In doing so, it hopes to bring back education as a sacred and transformative field that can give all students power and restore people's faith in its institutions.

### **Test of Hypotheses:**

#### **1) Pressure Cokker Approach in Education**

##### **Null Hypothesis (H0):**

Higher Education (HE) institutions and K12 schools cater equally to all students, providing the same learning opportunities regardless of their learning pace or ability.

##### **Alternative Hypothesis (H1):**

Higher Education (HE) institutions and K12 schools primarily focus on the top 5% to 10% of students by using high-pressure teaching methods, which leads to their advancement, while the remaining 90% of students- those who are slower or average learners, receive inadequate attention and support.

##### **Transformational Hypothesis (Ht):**

If HE and K12 adopt inclusive, learner-centred practices such as

- a) **Differentiated Instruction (DI)**, which tailors teaching to the diverse needs of students without labelling them;
- b) **Competency-Based Learning (CBL)**, which ensures progress is based on mastery of skills rather than time spent in class;
- c) **Formative Assessment (FA)**, which provides ongoing feedback during the learning process;
- d) **Assurance of Learning (AOL)**, which measures whether intended learning outcomes
- e) **Summative Assessment (SA)**, which evaluates overall achievement at the end of an instructional cycle; and
- f) **Provide Socio-emotional support**, then both high-achieving and slower learners will be empowered to thrive and succeed within the educational system.

## **2) Direct Marketing of Student's Achievement using them**

### **Null Hypothesis (H0):**

HE and K12 schools do not showcase student achievements in marketing, reflecting the authenticity of an educational institution.

### **Alternative Hypothesis (H1):**

HE and K12 schools highlight a small group of high achievers to market their services, leading to commercialization and commoditization of education.

### **Transformational Hypothesis (Ht):**

Authentic institutions avoid directly using high achievers' accomplishments for marketing and publicity, instead celebrating the diverse growth of all learners. By fostering equity, belonging, and recognition across the student community, they resist commoditization and nurture a culture of genuine educational value.

## **3) Alumni Trust as a measure of Excellence**

### **Null Hypothesis (H0):**

The percentage of alumni who send their children to the same educational institution is not a significant indicator of the institution's excellence.

### **Alternative Hypothesis (H1):**

The excellence of an educational institution is positively associated with the percentage of alumni who choose to enrol their own children in the same institution, reflecting long-term trust, satisfaction, and perceived value.

### **Transformational Hypothesis (Ht):**

If an educational institution cultivates academic quality, student well-being, and lifelong engagement, then a higher percentage of alumni will choose the same institution for their children-establishing alumni trust as a key benchmark of institutional excellence.

## **4. Minimalist Business Model in Private Institutions**

### **Null Hypothesis (H0):**

A majority of private educational institutions provide adequate compensation to faculty and staff, invest sufficiently in human resources, and achieve high-quality educational outcomes.

### **Alternative Hypothesis (H1):**

A majority of private educational institutions follow a minimalist business model that prioritizes cost-cutting by paying low salaries, attracting mediocre Faculty, overusing manpower, and consequently producing mediocre educational outcomes in a discipline that demands excellence.

### **Transformational Hypothesis (Ht):**

If private educational institutions adopt a value-driven model that prioritizes fair compensation, faculty development, and sustainable workloads, then the quality of teaching and learning outcomes will significantly improve - restoring education as a sacred and transformative discipline.

## **5: Compensation and Accountability**

### **Null Hypothesis (H0):**

1. **Government institutions** that pay teachers higher salaries but enforce strong accountability mechanisms demonstrate higher student learning outcomes compared to private institutions where accountability is high but compensation is low.

### **Alternative Hypothesis (H1):**

2. **Government institutions** that pay teachers higher salaries but enforce weak accountability mechanisms show lower student learning outcomes compared to private institutions where accountability is high but compensation is low.

### **Transformational Hypothesis (Ht):**

Excellence in education can be achieved only when fair compensation and robust accountability are balanced. Institutions that integrate these two factors will:

- Produce superior student learning outcomes,
- Generate greater alumni loyalty, and
- Build sustained institutional reputation

compared to models that emphasize only one dimension (either high pay without accountability or strict accountability with poor pay).

## **ANALYSIS OF VARIANCE AND INTERACTION**

### **2 × 2 ANOVA — hypotheses, expected cell pattern, and analysis plan**

We present a 2 × 2 ANOVA formulation using your two factors **Compensation** (High vs Low) and **Accountability** (High vs Low). I state the formal null/alternative hypotheses for the two main effects and the interaction, then give directional (transformational) expectations based on your text, a suggested cell-mean pattern, and practical notes on follow-ups.

- Factor A: **Compensation** (A1 = High, A2 = Low)
- Factor B: **Accountability** (B1 = High, B2 = Low)
- Dependent variable (DV): **Student learning outcomes** (e.g., standardized test scores, course completion, learning-gain index).

*You can also run parallel ANOVAs with alumni loyalty and institutional reputation as secondary DVs or use a MANOVA if you want to test them jointly.*

#### **Main effect of Compensation (A):**

- H0\_A:  $\mu_{A1\cdot} = \mu_{A2\cdot}$  (mean learning outcome for High Compensation = mean for Low Compensation)
- H1\_A:  $\mu_{A1\cdot} \neq \mu_{A2\cdot}$

#### **Main effect of Accountability (B):**

- H0\_B:  $\mu_{\cdot B1} = \mu_{\cdot B2}$  (mean for High Accountability = mean for Low Accountability)
- H1\_B:  $\mu_{\cdot B1} \neq \mu_{\cdot B2}$

#### **Interaction (A × B):**

- H0\_AB: no interaction — the effect of Compensation is the same at both levels of Accountability (additive model).
- H1\_AB: interaction exists — the effect of Compensation depends on the level of Accountability.

### **Transformational hypotheses**

#### **1. Accountability stronger predictor than Compensation:**

- Ht1:  $\mu_{\cdot B1} > \mu_{\cdot B2}$  (High Accountability yields higher learning outcomes than Low Accountability), with a larger effect size than the Compensation main effect.

#### **2. Compensation without accountability is insufficient:**

- Ht2:  $\mu_{A1B2} \leq \mu_{A2B2}$  (High pay + Low accountability  $\leq$  Low pay + Low accountability) — i.e., pay alone won't raise outcomes when accountability is low.

#### **3. When both are high:**

- Ht3:  $\mu_{A1B1} >$  all other cells (High Pay + High Accountability produces the highest outcomes).

#### **4. When both are low:**

- **When both are Low:** Ht4:  $\mu_{A2B2}$  (Low Pay + Low Accountability) has the lowest outcomes.

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**Note:** In the case of the Indian education system, we consider the normative structure of educational institutions such as K–12 schools and tier 2, tier 3, and tier 4 Higher Educational Institutions.

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