

Private Coaching Centres in India: A Document Analysis of
JEE-Advanced Preparation Centres on the Lives of Students in Kota

Gurbinder Kaur, M.Com

Department of Educational Studies

Submitted in partial fulfillment
of the requirements for the degree of
Master of Education

Faculty of Education, Brock University
St. Catharines, Ontario

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Abstract

Gone are the days when tuition or coaching classes were meant for academically weak students. With the Economic Reforms of 1991 (ER91), the Indian education system went through a series of changes, the most prominent being the growth of private educational institutions across the country. This led to creation of a billion-dollar coaching industry in India. Due to the ease of setting up private institutions and the absence of any regulatory body to vouch for them, the private institutions became immensely commercialized. The purpose of this study is to investigate the organizational structure of such coaching centres and analyze the various aspects of the organizational framework within which they operate. As the coaching industry is widespread, the study focuses on one of the popular coaching sectors that prepares aspiring engineers for the national level JEE-Advanced examination in a small town (Kota, in the northern state of Rajasthan) that has garnered a significant reputation as the coaching capital of the country.

Acknowledgements

I would like to briefly express my appreciation and gratitude to some individuals who made this research pathway feasible for me.

Firstly, I would like to acknowledge and thank my Major Research Paper supervisor, Dr. Rahul Kumar, for sharing his invaluable expertise, guidance, and encouragement throughout the process. I also took one of my courses with him, and that provided me with the primary insight and confidence to work on this topic. Secondly, I would like to thank my second reader, Dr. Michael Owen, whose constructive feedback provided me with a better understanding of the expectations from me as a researcher and an educator. I must also thank our International Student Services Coordinators, Susan Virtue and Clinton Kewley, for their continuous support and assistance with all the administrative formalities. My special thanks to Clinton for being a wonderful mentor and friend throughout this research journey.

Lastly, I would like to express my heartfelt gratitude to my family (my parents and my brother Inderbir Singh Dhanoa) for being my biggest support and critique; my friends (especially Pooja Rane and Jasmine Jasmine) for believing in me and pushing me through the tough times; my professors for sharing their valuable knowledge and inputs during my program; and my students for their immense love and affection. I am extremely grateful to have each one of you through this endeavour.

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CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

India's coaching industry might be a few decades old but its impact on the Indian education system and economy as a whole is substantial. The Economic Reforms of 1991 (ER91) laid the foundation for the rapid growth of private institutions across India. Initially, coaching classes were designed to help students boost their academic performance in school subjects. Gradually, the coaching centres expanded to go beyond the purview of school tutoring to prepare students for the national level entrance exams for various coveted professions such as engineering, management, or medicine.

According to a report by the Associated Chambers of Commerce and Industry of India (ASSOCHAM, 2013), because of a “desire to stay ahead in the global economy and the failing quality of mainstream education system, a whopping 87% of primary school children and up to 95% students in high schools receive private tutoring in metros” (para. 1). The report highlights how coaching centres became an inevitable part of the education system, especially in the urban areas. Most of the coaching centres tend to operate in metro cities like Delhi, Kolkata, or Mumbai because of the ease in accessing resources but recently some coaching centres have begun operating in small towns like Kota, Pune, and Hyderabad.

In recent years, due to the highly competitive and examination-oriented nature of the Indian education system, the coaching industry has built a strong foundation for itself. The roots are deeply embedded because of the growing importance of coaching for successfully passing the various entrance-level examinations. Rege (2015), in her analysis about coaching classes, states “there is a good coaching class behind every student's success” (para. 2). She further describes coaching classes as an urban cousin of the formal education system. With time, coaching classes have registered their presence

across India and continue to flourish at an incredible rate. As the ASSOCHAM (2013) asserts, “It has become the common solution for parents who want their children to excel academically. The boom in tuition centers is easily attributed to the perception that the country’s education system is flawed” (para. 13). Parents often set aside a considerable portion of their savings for enrolling their children to the best coaching centres. Coaching classes have become a must for creating a brighter future for the children.

Statistics compiled by Global Industry Analysts indicate that “the global scope of private tutoring market has the potential to cross \$102.8 [USD] billion with the US, Europe and Asia-Pacific having almost 90 percent share in this industry” (as cited in Anand, 2020, para. 2), representing a burgeoning industry currently valued at \$136.7 billion CAD. The coaching centres in India make a huge contribution to the global economy. It is significant to closely study the operations of the coaching industry. Because the coaching industry is widely dispersed, it is practical to analyze one segment of the industry at a time.

This paper highlights one of the most prominent and sought-after coaching industries in India and seeks to analyze its impact on students’ lives. The small industrial town of Kota in India gained recognition worldwide for training teenagers for the medical and engineering entrance exams. The coaching centres began to operate in the early 1980s but the ER91 added fuel to the process and coaching centres in Kota became immensely popular. The ease of setting up private institutions and the lack of any legal regulations lead to a mushrooming coaching industry in Kota. Thousands of aspiring engineers and doctors come to Kota every year to prepare for the entrance exams hoping to be successful.

The Mystery Box

The websites of popular coaching centres in Kota (e.g., see Allen.ac.in; Resonance.ac.in; Bansal.ac.in; Aakash.ac.in; Vibrantacademy.com; Motion.ac.in; [Career Point.ac.in](http://CareerPoint.ac.in)) have a common thread connecting all of them: Flashy posters flaunting All India Ranks (AIR) and marks of students who devoted years of dedication and faced excessive parental and peer pressure, spent sleepless nights, and experienced eating disorders and psychological trauma to successfully pass the Joint Entrance Exam Advanced (JEE-Advanced). Orberg (2018) argues that the JEE-Advanced is the ticket to seek admission into the prestigious Indian Institutes of Technology (IITs), considered to be the beacons of world-class excellence in the technical higher education sector in India. These institutes exercise a high degree of autonomy and receive significantly higher levels of funding from the government. In recent years, IITs have become a status symbol that inspires many teenagers to take up engineering.

IITs are known for their substantive and competitive pay packages that are offered to graduates, even on the international market. IITs offer fascinating opportunities to young graduates to move to foreign countries (especially the United States) for a brighter future. As Leung (2003) states, “The best and brainiest among them [well-educated Indians] seem to share a common credential: They’re graduates of the Indian Institute of Technology, better known as IIT” (para. 3). The computer and software industries in the United States comprise many IIT graduates taking the lead; for example, Sundar Pichai, the Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of Alphabet Inc. and its subsidiary Google LLC, and Vinod Khosla, the co-founder of Sun Microsystems, which created the famous Java programming language among many others.

The popularity of coaching escalated in India after the ER91 and ever since there has been no looking back. The shortcomings in the mainstream education system became the foundation stone for an industry that is worth \$110 million CAD according to a 2012 report by the Asian Development Bank (Bray & Lykins, 2012), not an insignificant sum when tabulated in local currency. Orberg (2018) cites a high-ranking official at a top-notch coaching centre in Kota who, when asked to share the mission of his institute, said “We would not be here, if the education system was not faulty” (p. 135). The shortcomings of the mainstream education system have become a breeding ground for the coaching centres across the country.

Religious places like temples are plastered with personalized wall notes and alms that students leave before appearing for the JEE-Advanced exam. These wall notes and alms are an evidence of the innumerable struggles and stresses that students face during their stay at these coaching centres. Their stories highlight their attempts to escape the miserable experiences they face in their teenage years. The temple walls are an incontrovertible witness of their many trials and tribulations that are often overlooked by parents when they decide to send their children to Kota.

Mehra (2018), who himself is an IIT teacher, informs us of the operations of coaching centres. According to Mehra, coaching centres operate on a market-driven model that aims at profit maximization. These coaching centres often ignore the mental, physical, and financial well-being of the students and their families. In the documentary *Assignment Asia- Kota: A Town of Lost Dreams*, Ravi Kumar, the District Magistrate of Kota, states:

Coaching institutes are doing their role but at the same time it should not be so

much market-driven that they ultimately forget that what they are dealing with are live human beings. They are not commodities; they are not some products that they are processing and throwing into the market. (Bawa, 2017)

Students still continue to be treated as mere commodities to be traded in the market. Students are shifted or traded from one coaching centre to another based on their academic performance and the money their parents spend on them. All coaching centres adopt interesting marketing strategies that range from the mundane to the innovative to attract maximum numbers of students to their centres. The credibility of the claims that are made in these advertisements and marketing tools is quite low. There is no regulatory authority to vouch for them. Although the success rate of coaching centres in Kota is higher than the rest of the country, the question remains: Is it worth it?

Mehra (2018) claims, about a 100,000 of aspiring students descend to Kota. He further states, “And so lakhs of aspirants enroll for coaching, in their own towns or boarding style classes away from home (of which Kota in Rajasthan has emerged as the most famous)” (para. 4). The JEE-Advanced is highly competitive and the lives of students are at stake in the process. The coaching industry established in Kota sustains the entire economy of the city. The ecosystem thrives on the coaching centres. Most of the coaching centres are boarding places where students are provided with accommodation and meal services. Students pick their packages (accommodation or meal plans) at the time of admission. The coaching centres charge almost the same amount for these additional services as the coaching tuition fees. Students also have an option to reside off-campus in the city. Paying Guests (PGs) are another great alternative for students. PGs are places of residence that students often choose when their parents decide

to only pay their child's tuition. But in the last few years, PGs have become expensive too with the rise in demand for off-campus housing in Kota. In recent years, Kota is flooded with PGs in every nook and corner, thereby sustaining the local economy. It has gradually become the source of livelihood for most people in the city.

Kota has been touted as the coaching capital of India for the last few decades. It is a popular belief that Kota brings the best out of students by providing them with the right mindset, direction, and resources. It is considered to be the Mecca for engineering and medical coaching. Young teenagers come to Kota with the dream of admission into the IITs. The prerequisite for entering IITs lies in passing the JEE-Advanced, one of the toughest entrance exams in the world (Ramnath, 2018). The journey calls for a very strict and disciplined lifestyle and a dedicated study schedule, away from any distractions. Students face many psychological issues while adapting to the coaching culture. In the documentary *Why Kota Kills*, The Quint (2016)—a general news and opinion website in India—disclosed that in recent years, coaching centres hired counsellors on campus to deal with students experiencing mental trauma. This step was initiated in response to the increasing number of mental illnesses in Kota.

What is alarming is the rate of suicides increasing in Kota every year. Kota grabbed the attention of media and the general Indian population when more than 70 students were reported to have taken their lives between 2013–2017 (Lakshmi, 2016). After claiming many more lives over the last few years, Kota has also become the suicide city of India (Asnani, 2018). The National Crime Bureau Records (NCBR) reports the national average suicide rate is 10.6 suicides per hundred thousand, while Kota has witnessed a rise in the number of suicide cases by 61.3%, which mostly comprises

students (“Kota Witnessed,” 2015, para. 2). The NCBR report singles out the coaching industry because it is higher than the national average and the age group is alarming, and political attention is lacking. Furthermore, the report informs that most of the suicides are committed crudely and horrifically—hanging self, setting oneself ablaze, and jumping from high buildings.

The coaching centres are nothing but *mystery boxes* that only highlight the bright side of the story. They are mystery boxes because the workings within them are unknown. As an educational administration student, I decided to examine the operations, structure, and peoples’ influences on the coaching centres. The coaching centre industry exists alongside mainstream education and therefore makes it an interesting area for comparative research. This study peers into the mystery box by critically examining the structure of these coaching centres.

Background of the Study

IITs are autonomous higher educational institutions established under the governance of the Institutes of Technology Act, 1961. The IITs are considered to be the apex institutions for engineering education and research in India (Ministry of Education [MoE], 2016). Each of the 23 IITs is linked to others through a common council, popularly called the IIT Council. The Minister of Human Resource Development is the ex-officio Chairperson of the IIT Council. Over several decades, IITs have garnered a national and international reputation and recognition for excellence in teaching, research, and professional training. In the recent Quacquarelli Symonds (QS) India university rankings 2019, seven of the top 10 institutions were IITs (Basu, 2019).

Admission into the IITs is viewed in the same league as gaining admission into United States Ivy League universities, including MIT. Amongst the general Indian population, engineering is considered to be a coveted profession. The popularity of engineering education inspires many students to prepare for the engineering entrance exam. Parents or guardians spare nothing (including their life savings) to prepare their children or wards to succeed in these entrance exams. Successfully completing these examinations and gaining entry into an IIT promises a better future.

Most students who plan on attending the IITs start preparing for the national level entrance exam (JEE-Advanced) at the higher secondary education level (Grade 11/12), The exam is held annually in May or June, and over 150,000 students appear for it every year (Orberg, 2018). To prepare for the JEE-Advanced, children begin preparations early by joining the coaching centres. The average age of students enrolling for these coaching centres ranges between 15–17 years and it takes a minimum of about 2 to 3 years of preparation (Sengupta, 2014). The mentioned age group strives to transition successfully from schools to postsecondary institutions.

Mathews (2015) presents the 2014 report by the Joint Implementation Committee (a governing body at the IITs that discloses the trends in the JEE-Advanced exam) that highlights some of the remarkable statistics on the JEE-Advanced exam:

1. Males dominate the total admitted candidates with 92%.
2. Over 76% of the qualified candidates come from urban areas.
3. Over 90% of the students in India are enrolled in schools affiliated to State boards as opposed to the central government educational boards. However, in 2014, the majority of the qualified candidates came from the two national school boards: the

Central Board of Secondary Education (CBSE) and Council for Indian School Certificate Examinations (CISCE).

The report offered insights into various kinds of disparity in the JEE-Advanced exam. The specific focus on the JEE-Advanced coaching is considered detrimental to the success of the students. Mehra (2018) notes “It is a widely-held belief that it is impossible to do well in the JEE without coaching, especially given the deficiencies of learning inside schools” (para. 1). The influence of private coaching is undeniable. Parents generally save money for their child’s education but the popularity of IITs is so widespread that a lot of parents give up their entire savings to get their child admitted into the coaching centres and subsequently into IITs. It is their belief that inspires them to visualize a brighter future for their child, which in turn would elevate the financial condition of their family.

Orberg (2018) informs that the coaching industry developed as a result of the shortcomings in mainstream education. However, the impact of privatization cannot be ignored in the growth of private supplementary tutoring in India, which most of the students attend or enrol into, irrespective of whether they want to attend IITs. That is, children preparing for the Grade 12 exam alongside school will be enrolled in tutoring for subjects in which they are weak. Coaching means training, and in education, coaching centres are treated as centres that promote better academic performance. The 2012 report by the Asian Development Bank considers private tutoring as “shadow education” as it mimics mainstream education (Bray & Lykins, 2012). The presence of coaching centres across the country has become so prominent that the formal education system has started to face criticism.

What was once considered to be an alternative for weak students became a must

to excel at academic achievement or the means to clear the various national level entrance exams. One of the officials at a coaching centre supports the view:

According to Sudhanshu Sinhal, Managing Director, Sinhal Classes, “A change of perception towards coaching has fuelled the growth.” Sinhal explains that previously, tuitions were meant only for weak students who couldn’t cope with their school exams. “There was a certain sense of stigma attached to it,” he says. However, it has now gone on to become a necessity for anyone and everyone who needs that extra training to make the grade. (As cited in Rege, 2015, para. 6)

Furthermore, among the many marketing strategies adopted by coaching centres, coaching centres try to portray a lucrative picture through the selective presentation of facts. For instance, Banik (2019) points out that the poaching of high-performing students from rival coaching centres by paying them a high amount of money is an unethical practice that has come to the limelight in recent years. Institutes publish the names and pictures of such students to advertise their centres, through online and offline platforms. What people see are success stories but nobody knows about the background of creating a success story. It is important to note that most of the coaching centres are unregulated (Mehra, 2018). No supervisory or regulatory body in India can vouch for the functioning of the coaching industry. Perhaps, this is the primary reason for mushrooming coaching centres across India. The ease of setting up and running coaching centres makes it a viable business opportunity.

Statement of the Problem Context

With thousands of students migrating to Kota from different parts of the country and varied socio-economic, religious, and cultural backgrounds, it is important to study the functioning of the coaching centres. The preparation process for JEE-Advanced is a

life-changing phenomenon for students. This change may be positive (i.e., achieving admission to their preferred IIT) or negative (i.e., creating significant economic burdens on families to pay for the cost of the coaching experience). On the negative side, they may face physical, mental, and emotional challenges. For years, these negative aspects remained hidden from the families and the broader society until students' suicides at these centres were reported more widely. Mehra (2018) describes an instance of a student disclosing the fact that nobody pays attention to students unless they are a topper (a student securing the highest marks in a subject or program) or commit suicide. This is the harsh reality of coaching centres that has gone unnoticed and unreported for many years. Every life is precious and no exam is big enough to determine the worth of a student. Therefore, it is important to identify the reasons that contribute to creating a stressful atmosphere for students. This is possible to understand by studying the structure and operations of the coaching centres closely.

The organizational framework within which the coaching centres operate is a critical aspect to be examined for getting an insight into the coaching industry. The next chapter deals with various elements of the organizational environment that makes these coaching centres immensely popular among the aspiring engineering students and their parents or guardians. Mehra (2018) argues the primary objective of the coaching centres is to generate profit and students are treated as nothing more than a profit-making machine. Coaching centres are great marketers for selling the IIT dream to enthusiastic teenagers. In recent years, a lot of politicians and businessmen have started investing in coaching centres. It has become a feasible business opportunity for various politicians and corporations due to the rise in demand for students enrolling in such preparation centres. It has gradually led to the creation of the coaching industry in India.

Personal Context

My past academic experience (both schooling and higher education) and teaching in a higher educational institute in India allowed me to build a robust foundation for this research paper. I have always been a strong proponent of the neo-liberal philosophy of education because of its ability to combat the shortcomings of mainstream education. In this era of globalization, private institutions are taking the lead in contributing to raising the quality standards of education in India. But there is an element of commercialization and commodification that cannot be ignored.

I wrote a paper on the impact of commodification and commercialization of education in India for one of my courses (EDUC 5P99: Introduction to Studies in Education). The paper further led me to investigate the aspect of commercialization in the Indian education system through the lens of various courses I took in the Master of Education (MEd) program at Brock University. Throughout the MEd program, I connected various aspects of commercialization to “Constructions of Organization” (EDUC 5P60), “The Challenges of Educational Leadership” (EDUC 5P73), and “Effecting Change in Education” (EDUC 5P72).

When I was finalizing the topic for my MRP, I picked a topic that resonated with me on a personal level. Even though I do not have an engineering background, there have been various instances of my association with friends, students, counsellors, and faculty members from the engineering profession. Moreover, growing up in the Indian education system has provided me with a deep understanding of its pros and cons.

In recent years there have been various books, movies, or web series that have highlighted the problems of the coaching centres in Kota. My inspiration primarily came from a popular Indian web-series called *Kota Factory*, directed by Raghav Subbu (The

Viral Fever, 2019) that I had watched before coming to Canada. The web series led me to view these coaching centres through a critical lens. It also helped me to explore other documentaries and web series created on the backdrop of coaching centres in Kota.

As a responsible educator, I believe in taking the first step towards effecting change in education. The more we talk about the problems, the closer we get to the solutions. It is important to analyze the coaching centres from a critical standpoint to identify and rectify the issues that seldom come to surface.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study is to investigate the structure of the coaching centres that prepare secondary school graduates to appear for the JEE-Advanced. The study also seeks to analyze the various aspects of the organizational framework concerning its structure, the role of its staff, and its impact on the lives of students.

Research Question

This paper is a deliberate attempt to study and analyze the workings of the private coaching centres in Kota and how they place high expectations on teenagers. The long-term investment made by parents to get their children enrolled in these coaching centres comes at huge personal, emotional, and fiscal costs to the students and their families. The emotional cost involved in these investment leave lasting impressions on the lives of the students. While some students can deal with excessive pressure, others succumb to it. The impact is on different levels: physically, emotionally, and mentally. In recent years, there has been a rise in the number of suicide cases in Kota, which supports the stance. The study attempts to understand the otherwise hidden elements of the coaching centres.

Definition of Terms

Table 1 presents a list of terms and abbreviations used in this document.

Table 1*Terms Used in This Document*

Term	Meaning
Coaching Centre	A place where students are trained for specific exams for a specific time. These centres are private and operate alongside mainstream (public and private) educational institutes.
ER91	The Economic Reforms of 1991 in India involved Liberalization, Privatization and Globalization policy (also popularly called the LPG Policy).
IITs	Indian Institute of Technology are a group of institutions in India that provide technical higher education. They offer various programs at the undergraduate, postgraduate and doctorate levels. The most popular programs include Bachelor of Technology and Master of Technology.
IIT-JEE	Indian Institute of Technology- Joint Entrance Exam is a national level engineering entrance exam, held annually in India. It is the sole prerequisite for admission into the IITs.
JEE-Advanced	The IIT-JEE was renamed in 2013 to Joint Entrance Exam-Advanced.
Paying Guest (PG)	When students reside off-campus for a scheduled time and only pay the tuition, they are referred to as Paying Guests. It is similar to the concept of residential schools, also known as Day Scholars.
State Boards	In India, there are two administrative bodies that run the school system. Some boards are centrally governed, while others are governed by the Government of the respective states (provinces). State boards can design their own curriculum and assessment procedures and they get funds from the state government.
Lakh	A lakh is a unit in the Indian numbering system which is equal to one hundred thousand [100,000]

Rationale of the Study

Bray and Lykins (2012) state that private supplementary education is establishing its presence across the world at a fast pace, especially in the Asian subcontinent. India has made a huge contribution to the global economy through its coaching industry. The coaching industry's popularity can be understood through the investments being made in it:

Seeing the potential of the coaching business in the Indian market, foreigners too are investing heavily in the arena. In 2011, South Korean coaching giant Etoos invested Rs 30 Crore [INR] to set up centres in Kota, focusing on video lecturing and e-learning. (Rege, 2015, para. 4)

As a student of higher education policy and leadership, my study of the coaching industry in Kota qualifies as an important area of research for several reasons. First, the coaching industry has flourished for nearly 30 years and has had a lasting impact on the Indian education system. Tuition classes, which eventually evolved into coaching classes, gained popularity years ago, and the semi-structured organizational framework enabled coaching centres to build a multi-billion-dollar industry (Acharjee, 2015). The less formal the structure, the easier to start.

The coaching industry has grown profoundly. The industry has created a “must-have” reputation for itself and simultaneously tarnished the reputation of mainstream education provided by the state and private secondary schools. The documentary *Why Kota Kills* by The Quint (2016) points out the dummy school culture that is a consequence of the widespread coaching industry. The documentary also describes dummy schools—local schools in which students are enrolled on paper but in practice, they attend the coaching centres.

Second, despite their immense popularity, the functioning of the coaching centres remains unexamined. There is a lack of sufficient peer-reviewed scholarly literature that studies the intricacies existing within these brick and mortar structures. Third, the popularity of IITs and need to score well in the JEE-Advanced has made coaching among teenagers an important topic of critical study and research.

The Asian Development Bank 2012 report indicates that nearly 82% of high school students in India manage to participate in regular schooling and attend additional coaching for competitive exams such as the JEE-Advanced (Acharjee, 2015). The demand for coaching centres has been on the rise since the Economic Reforms of 1991 and the increased competitiveness to gain entry into IITs, IIMs, and top-quality universities. The importance of the coaching market to the economies of Kota and other centres is enormous. There are about 130 coaching centres in Kota at present (The Quint, 2016) and approximately one million students studying at these centres on an annual basis. As per the India Population 2020 (2020) report, Kota had a total population of 2.938 million in 2019.

Students who attend coaching centres give up everything from socializing with friends and going to movies to enjoying school life that a typical teenager desires to involve in the rigorous training process. Furthermore, most of the students join the coaching due to peer-pressure or to appease their parents (Mishra & Singh, 2017). This is a surprising fact in itself. The whole coaching industry is thriving on creating future engineers or other highly prized professional (medical doctors, lawyers, etc.) out of students who do not necessarily want to be engineers.

Different stakeholders have contributed to making the coaching industry flourish

by leaps and bounds. In addition to the coaching centres that provide tuition, Kota has become a haven for providers of student accommodation. Hostels and guest houses are equally flourishing to provide accommodation to the students at large. There are over 800 hostels in Kota that support about 70% of Kota's economy (Mishra & Singh, 2017). These centres have not only prospered individually but also contributed immensely to fuel the economy of the city. Different authors (e.g., Mishra & Singh, 2017; Orberg, 2018) show varied statistics. There is no consistency in the reports. A more integrated and holistic study is required in the future to add more credibility in the statistics being disclosed.

Conceptual Framework

To understand the growing importance of the Kota coaching industry, we need to look to explanatory theories and the organizational structures of these centres. The organizational framework surfaces to be one of the primary factors for the success of the coaching industry. The nature of the organization is important to understand its functionality. The private coaching centres operate on a semi-structured organizational framework that incorporates both formal and non-formal elements of organizations. The organizational framework also plays a crucial role in determining the structural and contextual elements of an organization as proposed by Daft (2009). These elements are fundamental to the growth of an organization that strives for success. Both structural and contextual elements are significant to provide strong ground for organizations to flourish.

The next factor is the presence of human resources at the coaching centres. The human resource is considered to be a highly dynamic resource for an organization. It can determine the success or failure of any organization. The role of administrative staff and

faculty is critical to the understanding of the coaching industry in Kota. Taylor's scientific management principles serve as the guiding light for this section of the paper (Koumparoulis & Solomos, 2012). It stresses the need to encompass results-driven principles for human resources at work to maintain a standard level of efficiency. It also reflects upon the elements of providing detailed instruction and close supervision of each faculty or administrative staff member. There is a clear division of work between the faculty members and the administrative staff.

The third factor deals with the impact of coaching centres on the lives of students enrolled in these centres. The coaching centres have mastered selling the IITs dream through innovative and attractive marketing strategies over the years. There is a great similarity between the coaching centres and indoctrination (Akundi, 2020). Students in their teenage years are akin to soft clay and can be easily molded to accept a different set of beliefs without critically examining its validity. The Kota industry builds an environment of discipline and strict study routines where students are threatened to lose a seat in the IITs if they fall into any of the distractions. The elements of Theory X (Matteson & Ivancevich, 1993) has a tremendous role to play at the coaching centres in Kota that are analyzed in the next section of the paper. The theory emphasizes the role of management in creating the organizational structure and the manner in which the organization should function. It also involves directing the efforts of people to accomplish the long-term goals of the organization.

Methodological Context

This paper is centred upon qualitative research involving a thorough document analysis of the coaching centres operating Kota. Four primary types of documents are

considered for research. As described by Bowen (2009), document analysis is a type of qualitative research whereby documents are studied to add meaning to the prospective topic under question. It includes analyzing various forms of documents to provide background information about the topic, including the following:

1. Public records (statistics from national sources and self-reported statistics from the IIT Council; annual reports, policy manuals, newsletters). The statistical data is incorporated mostly from the official reports published by the IIT Council. The official website of IITs is referred to for the most updated information.
2. Personal documents, as defined by Bowen (2009) are first-person account of individual actions, experiences, or beliefs such as blogs, social media posts. The inspiration for this study primarily came from personal documents including different accounts of students or faculty members sharing their experiences at the coaching centres in Kota. It involves blog posts or documentaries created by students in Kota. Some of the popular web series including The Kota Factory provided some deep insights into the coaching industry.
3. Physical evidence: Physical objects found within the study settings (e.g., flyers, posters, handbooks, agendas). The websites of different coaching centres are studied to get a better understanding of their vision, mission, organizational structure and their nature of functioning.
4. Academic journal articles corresponding to the industry and its practices. The core of the paper lies in analyzing the peer-reviewed journal articles based on first-hand data collection undertaken by the researchers. It helped to provide a substantial basis for this research study.

Because my research study is based on a thorough document analysis of publicly available data (peer-reviewed journal articles, books, official documents and websites) devoid of any human participation or involvement, this paper is exempted from Ethics Clearance by the Research Ethics Board at Brock University (Brock University, 2018). Appendix A also includes a copy of the exemption letter issued by the university's REB.

Importance of the Study

Private educational institutions are ubiquitous throughout the world. Their growing popularity is unquestionable. Globalization has contributed to significant changes in the education sector, including the growth of private sector actors across all educational levels. In some nations, public institutions struggle to maintain quality standards due to lack of resources and private institutions become an alternative pathway for students and families who can afford them. The investment made in the private institutions ensure that students get the best infrastructure and resources. For instance, the lab equipment is often outdated in public institutions but that is not the case in private institutions.

Despite the advantages, privatization has its own set of disadvantages that needs to be addressed. The main aim of private institutions is to make profits by satisfying the end consumer. Katopes (2009) informs that in a highly competitive market of education, customer or student satisfaction has become extremely important. The business model of education attempts to prepare students for the job market and focuses on the profit-maximization agenda. Katopes (2009) further states that "The business model is the wrong model for education. We need to reaffirm what it is, beyond technical knowledge of a subject, that we wish our students to learn" (para. 13). There is a need for private

institutions to raise moral and ethical questions while functioning on the sole motive of profit-making.

This study of India's growing coaching industry closely resonated with me as an educator because of the structure of the organizations in question. As a student of education, I believe it is important to understand the intricacies of the private institutions to identify the issues and concerns that come with them. When you shift your focus from talking about problems to finding solutions, it becomes easier to incorporate change at any level in the organization. No education system is perfect. We are always growing as individuals and as a community. What matters is taking the initiative and making small contributions at various levels in the education system. As teachers, administrators, policymakers or even as parents, we have a responsibility to shoulder. I believe I have taken a positive step in that direction by playing an active role in analyzing the education system and suggesting measures for the shortcomings.

Scope and Limitations of the Study

Document analysis serves a good starting point for analyzing the structure and functioning of the coaching centres in Kota. This topic has immense scope for further research. The coaching industry has flourished in the last few years to not only compete with other private educational institutions but also posed a challenge for the mainstream education system in India.

Qualitative research undertaken through document analysis suffers from two major limitations. One, a piece of the document does not provide complete information in response to the research question. The researcher is required to constantly connect the dots and establish a link between the different documents available to him/her for the

study. Moreover, the study of coaching centres in India has caught public attention in recent years and there are many factors that lie unexamined. Also, the academic, peer-reviewed literature is scarce on the given topic which also makes it an excellent area of expanding this study.

Two, qualitative research includes biases, either in the documents being analyzed or on the part of the researcher. I have tried to honestly depict the organizational framework of the coaching centres and the impact the organizational structure has on the lives of students to the best of my ability. However, there could be an instance where my analysis involved any kind of bias on my part. I have tried to overcome this concern by actively discussing the documents with my supervisor and fellow researchers.

The document base is obtained from publicly available sources. A richer and more complex picture could have been construed and analyzed if student journals and private reflections (if they exist) could be accessed. Failing that, interviews with students, faculty, and administrators for the coaching centres would provide an alternate portrayal of the coaching centres.

Outline of the Remainder of the Document

In Chapter 1, I introduced the research area of the study being undertaken by providing an overview of the coaching centres in Kota. The background provides a better understanding of the importance of IITs in India and the growing popularity of JEE-Advanced coaching. The statement of the problem context outlines the problem that exists in the functioning of the coaching centres. Further, I established the purpose of this study and identified the conceptual framework within which this study is conducted. The methodological text provides an insight into the research methodology undertaken for

this research paper. Like every research study, this paper also has certain limitations that can be addressed through further research.

In Chapter 2, I provide a backdrop of the coaching industry in Kota and how it generated a million-dollar industry over the years. Then, I connect the theoretical knowledge with practice to analyze the organizational framework within which these coaching centres operate. I identify three core areas or elements to study the Kota coaching industry: structural elements of private coaching centres; the role of administrative staff and faculty; and the impact of the lives of students. These elements have been closely studied based on one of the courses (EDUC 5P60: Constructions of Organization) undertaken during the MEd program.

In Chapter 3, I discuss the implications for theory, practice, and research for this study. I also provide certain recommendations that can be considered for further research. Towards the end, I articulate my reflection based on the research experience I gained while undertaking my Major Research Paper. I also seek to learn from my mistakes and grow as a result of the process.

CHAPTER TWO: THE KOTA ANALYSIS

The purpose of this study is to investigate the structure of the coaching centres that prepare its graduates to appear for the JEE-Advanced. The study also seeks to analyze the various aspects of the organizational framework concerning its structure, the role of its staff, and the impact of such an organization on the lives of students. First, this chapter highlights the growing importance of higher education in India. Then, it presents the breadth and scope of the coaching industry. It also presents a summary of the history of coaching centres in Kota and their impact on the lives of students. It makes connections to various theories of organization pertinent for understanding the coaching centres. This coaching industry does not function as a monolith and has tremendous variations across each of the coaching centres (such as the Allen Career Institute and the Bansal Classes, among others). There is, however, remarkable similarity across them when it comes to the overall treatment of pupils under their care and training regime. This chapter also examines and analyzes the impact of such rigorous coaching (training) on the lives of students who attend these private coaching centres from a general perspective as it is impossible to glean into specifics of student lives from the public document analysis that this research undertakes.

India has a massive population of 1.210 billion, as per the 2011 Census report and has been growing over the years (see Table 2). Trines (2018) states “India is expected to overtake China as the largest country on earth by 2022 and grow to about 1.5 billion people by 2030 (up from 1.34 billion in 2017)” (para. 2). Trines further indicates that most of the Indian population comprises youths under the age of 25. Education has become one of the government’s top priorities, especially after the ER91. According to All India Survey on Higher Education (AISHE; MHRD, 2016), the growth of higher education in India has been tremendous in comparison to the population growth.

Table 2*Indian Population at a Glance (in Millions)*

2001 Census	2011 Census
1028.7	1210.6

Note. Source: MHRD (2018, p. 3).

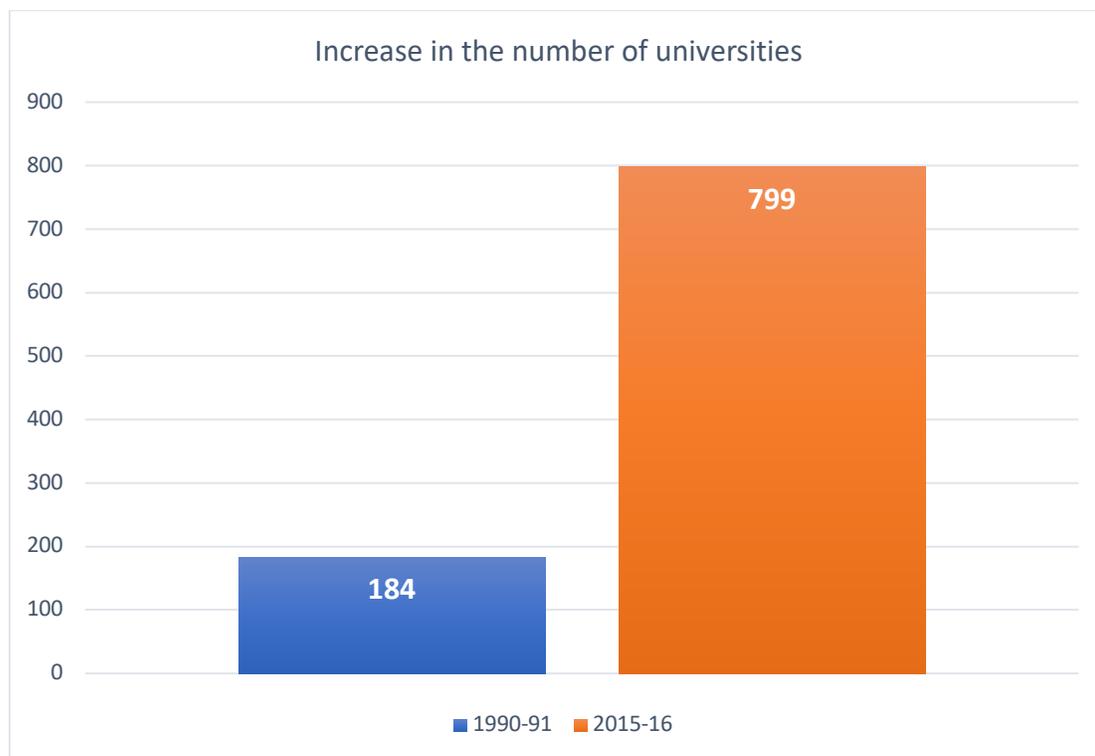
The 2016 AISHE categorized higher educational institutions into three broad categories: university/university level institutions; college/institutions affiliated/recognized with university; and stand-alone institutions not affiliated/recognized with university (MHRD, 2016). (See Figure 1.) The university level institutions are the ones that are established or incorporated under a central, provincial, or state Act and have the right to confer or grant degrees. It includes both publicly and privately managed institutions. The increase in the total number of universities has been over 334% since 1991 (see Figure 2). The 2016 AISHE notes that “Among 799 universities, 277 are privately managed and 307 universities are located in rural areas” (MHRD, 2016, p. 5). The IITs fall under the subcategory of Institution of National Importance (INI), which are established by Act of Parliament of India. Orberg (2018) states, “The IIT systems’ 23 institutes have been promoted by successive governments as key institutions in catch-up India’s ambition to become a global power” (p. 134). The IITs have gained immense popularity among Indian youths to prepare them to become highly skilled intellectuals and contribute to national growth of the country.

The colleges are institutions that can run degree programs but are not empowered to award degrees. The increase in the number of colleges since 1991 has been almost 580% (see Figure 3). More than 78% of the colleges are privately owned and enrol about 67% of the students (MHRD, 2016, p. 23). The numbers reflect the private sector’s growth in the last three decades. Stand-alone institutions generally fall outside the purview of university and college and offer diploma or postgraduate diploma programs that require recognition from one or more statutory bodies. Some of the institutions that fall under this category include the Indian Institute of Management (IIMs), All India Council for Technical Education (AICTE), and Indian Nursing Council (INC).

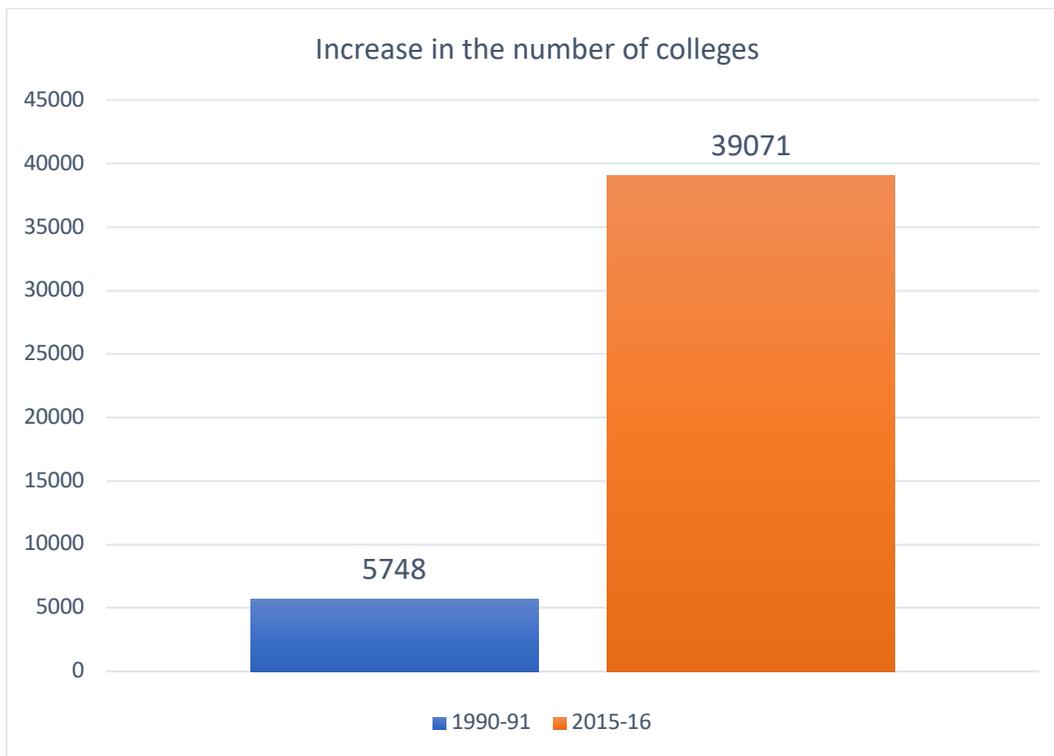
Figure 1*Number of Recognized Institutions in Higher Education in 2017*

Number of Institutions in Higher Education	University	Central University	43
		State Public University	329
		Deemed University	122
		State Private University	197
		Central Open University	1
		State Open University	13
		Institution of National Importance	75
		State Private Open University	1
		Institutions under State Legislature Act	5
		Others	13
		Total	799
	College	39071	
	Stand Alone Institution	Diploma Level Technical	3867
		PGDM	435
		Diploma Level Nursing	3060
		Diploma Level Teacher Training	4403
		Institute under Ministries	158
		Total	11923

Note. Source: MHRD (2018, p. 7).

Figure 2*Increase in the Number of Universities*

Note. Source: MHRD (2018, p. 22).

Figure 3*Increase in the Number of Colleges*

Note. Source: MHRD (2018, p. 22).

The numbers reflected in Figures 2 and 3 show the tremendous growth of the private sector in higher education since ER91. The private educational institutions have benefited society by making education accessible to the middle-class Indian students. It also provided them with more choice in terms of selection of educational institutions to excel with their studies. Within the private educational sector, a particular new industry has emerged: the coaching industry. The coaching industry exists throughout India and is a response to the increasing demand for admission to postsecondary institutions and the increasing competitiveness and increased selectivity of those institutions. The Asian Development Bank's 2012 report estimated the coaching industry to be growing more than 15% each year (Bray & Lykins, 2012).

The shift to private sector educational providers such as coaching centres from mainstream education providers was a market response to the aspirations of the emerging middle classes and gave new hopes to students who would have otherwise not received formal technical higher education. The ER91 also increased competition between private and public universities and institutes and amongst the publicly funded postsecondary institutions.

The technical higher education sector involves IITs, which are considered to be institutions of national importance. The number of IITs, the flagship of Indian engineering education, increased from six in 1991 to 23 at present (see Table 3). The growth of IITs, their specialization, and growth in the number of students in IITs is a response to public policy (national development) needs and student aspirations. The popularity continues to rise and it has been considered as a matter of pride to be associated with an IIT.

Table 3*Number of IITs, 1991 vs. 2018*

1991	2018
6	23

Note. Source: Orberg (2018, p. 134).

A particular/peculiar outcome of the growth of IITs and their popularity amongst students and the public has been the emergence of the coaching industry throughout India. This chapter provides a brief history on the inception and functioning of private coaching centres in Kota, a city in the northwestern part of India, which is seen as the most prominent and long-standing IIT coaching hub in India (although other centres exist in other parts of the country). Kota's current population as of 2019 is 2.93 million (India Population, 2020; see Table 4). Most of Kota's economy relies on a strong migratory student population from all over the country to prepare for JEE-Advanced (Orberg, 2018).

The implementation of the ER91, which included the deregulation of the education system, fostered a series of transitions in the Indian economy. Under ER91 and the introduction of privatization in education, the foundation stone for the neo-liberal philosophy of education was laid and privatized education flourished (Kumar, 2011). Setting up private institutions became an exciting business opportunity for politicians and businessmen as they possessed the necessary financial resources and political and social connections for it. Alongside mainstream education, coaching centres or private tuition classes became immensely popular. Businesses capitalized on the most popular and financially lucrative education markets. The educational reforms brought unanticipated entrepreneurial organizations into action by providing them with the ease to set up private institutions. Coaching centres were one such feasible business opportunity that emerged as a consequence of it. Coaching centres became a means to generate profit for the private sector and entrepreneurs. They capitalized on these opportunities.

Table 4*Population of Kota (in Millions)*

2011	2019
1.00	2.93

Note. Source: India Population 2020 (2020).

Despite the shortcomings of the commercialization of education, the modern-day coaching centres contribute to a majority of their candidates' success. The different modes of preparation for JEE-Advanced include coaching, undertaking correspondence courses, taking individual tuition classes, and self-study. More than 50% of candidates admitted into the IITs come from coaching centres (Indian Institute of Technology Madras [IITM], 2017). Therefore, coaching has become a significant part of the preparation process for JEE-Advanced aspirants. Mehra (2018) states “And so lakhs of aspirants enroll for coaching, in their own towns or boarding style classes away from home (of which Kota in Rajasthan has emerged as the most famous)” (para. 4). Over the years, Kota has established itself as the most prominent place for coaching centres.

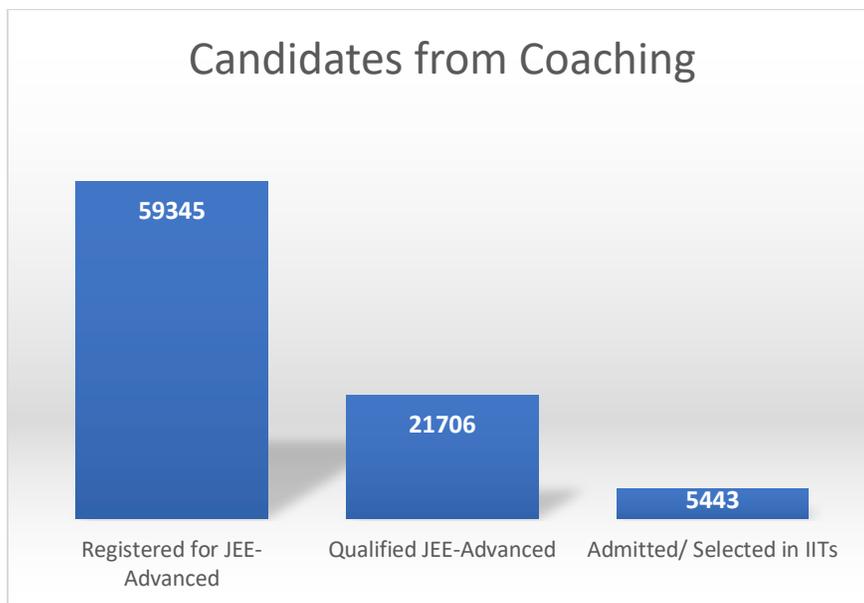
The *2017 Joint Implementation Committee Report* notes that 171,814 students registered for JEE-Advanced and 51,040 candidates passed the exam and made it to the rank list (IITM, 2017; see Table 5). These candidates further applied for the admission process in various IITs. Bhandary (2017) notes there were a total of 11,032 seats across IITs in 2017 and the number of seats vary from one institute to the other. Out of the total candidates who registered for JEE-Advanced, 5,443 were from different coaching centres across India and got selected in one of the IITs (see Figure 4).

Engineering and medical fields are considered to be the most coveted professions in India. Most parents aspire to see their children groomed into either an engineer or a doctor—for better job prospects, better living conditions, the social capital associated with these professions, and the long-held cultural beliefs about these professions. Coaching centres started functioning in various parts of the country to provide training for the engineering and medical entrance exams. As more students successfully got admission into the IITs (and medical schools) from these coaching centres, many aspiring engineers and their parents/guardians were drawn to them (Banik, 2019).

Table 5*Qualified Candidates in JEE-Advanced in 2017*

Registered: Number of candidates who applied for JEE-Advanced	Appeared: Number of candidates who actually appeared for JEE-Advanced	Qualified: Number of candidates who passed the JEE-Advanced and qualified for admission to the IITs
171,814	159,540	51,040

Note. Source: IITM (2017, p. 10).

Figure 4*JEE-Advanced Candidates From Coaching*

Note. Source: IITM (2017, p. 381).

Orberg (2018) argues that the IITs are renowned institutes of national recognition possessing a high degree of autonomy (in terms of the course structure, examination pattern, and assessment) and are perceived as beacons of world-class excellence in the Indian technical higher education sector. Every aspiring Indian engineering student dreams of getting admission into one of the IITs in India and create promising career prospects for themselves. In India, students need to appear for the Indian Institute of Technology Joint Entrance Exam Advanced (abbreviated as JEE-Advanced) to gain admission into these institutions. The competition is fierce, and students across India devote years of preparation for the JEE-Advanced exams.

The emergence of private coaching centres, especially the large centres and those with multiple sites, altered the role of teachers from knowledge givers to traders of education. The corporate model of education pushed the dynamics of postsecondary education in India towards extensive commercialization. Education became a commodity to be offered for sale in the market with students as its prime consumers (Kumar, 2011). Ideally, and perhaps the initial formation of India in the post-independence era did deliver on the promise, the purpose of education was to impart knowledge and contribute to nation-building. But with the onset of privatization in the post-1991 era, education became another commodity that could be traded in the marketplace. As the number of private institutions increased across all educational sectors, education became a feasible business opportunity to make an investment and earn profit. While private institutions advertised their quality of their faculty and administrative staff and the success of their students, potential attendees and their parents or guardians became the intended target of this colossal marketing campaign—that is, the end-consumers. Hence, the business

organizations and entrepreneurs that invested heavily in private educational institutes tried to extract the maximum profit through various marketing activities.

The tensions between the client objectives and owner objectives became prominent in these centres. Students were (and are) always the focal point of consideration of the coaching centres. Students aim to prepare and succeed in the JEE-Advanced entrance exams. But the aspect of commercialization has posed various challenges in recent years. Mehra (2018) comments on the commercialization aspect of coaching centres:

This is even more insidious than it seems on a broader level—the definition of “academic success” is now defined socially in a very narrow, monopolistic manner by the JEE and this is propagated, marketed and guarded fiercely by the coaches. And why not? The money keeps rolling in. (para. 4)

The coaching centres started viewing students as a means to earn profit. Students had to bear the cost of privatization, not just monetarily but also in other forms. Peer-pressure, mental health issues, parental pressure, cut-throat competition, and lost teenage life were some of the negative, unintended outcomes of studying at these private coaching centres (Mishra & Singh, 2017). Students who are often seen to excel at their academics in schools are petrified at the level of competition they face at these centres. The pool of candidates at these centres comes from different cities across India. It is like putting the best fish from the aquarium into a huge pond. It is difficult for the students to cope with these changes in their early teenage years. But the burden of expectations from their parents and the competitive environment at the coaching centres force them to struggle through the process.

Orberg's (2018) description of coaching centres is revealing. Selection tests are conducted at these centres at the time of admission and students are allotted to specific sections based on their rankings in the admission tests. For instance, the meritorious students are put in Level A, average-performing students in Level B, and so on. Only a few students are placed in the top Level A, a few more in Level B, and a whole lot more in Level C. And yet, because of the inherent hierarchy of skills and performance, students in the lower levels often face criticism, mockery, and ridicule by the high-performing students at these centres. Orberg (2018) informs that weekly or biweekly tests are also conducted to maintain consistency of the students' performance. Placements of students in levels are shuffled on the basis of these biweekly test performances. This is both an opportunity and threat for students; while it allows students from the lower levels to improve their performance, it poses a major threat for students who have already been acknowledged for their high performance.

The documentary *Why Kota Kills* states "The competition is cut-throat. Making friends, cellphones and even celebrating birthdays is considered taboo" (The Quint, 2016). When the competition is fierce, even the human connection in the form of friendship is rare, strained, and poisoned. Friendships knit together under such circumstances last either a lifetime or fail to forge at all. Loneliness abounds. Asnani (2018) affirms "According to experts, when students arrive in Kota for coaching, they suddenly find themselves amid unknown people. With each one of them competing with lakhs of others, it's difficult for the students to strike a close bond of friendship" (para. 16). Everybody is looked upon as a competitor than a friend because a peer's success at the JEE-Advanced is often interpreted as loss of one more spot for self. It is believed that

these coaching centres direct the faculty to focus more on the high-performing students. Ideally, every student should be provided with the best resources and support that they need. It is disheartening and frustrating for low-performing students to mirror this reality.

Everybody pays an exorbitant amount of admission fees. Parents often use their lifetime savings or take loans to pay the fees. The coaching centres create an environment where everybody is prepared to run in the race, keeping their emotions and expressions at bay. At this stage in life when the adolescent bodies are flooded with hormones, this proves exceedingly difficult to control. The food served in mess (canteen) has been a topic of debate for years now. The quality of food is not appropriate which, in addition to other stressors at the centre, leads to deteriorating health of the students. Furthermore, the centres' singular focus on the competitive entrance exam on the one hand and maximization of profit for the owners and shareholders on the other hand precludes students' access to physical activity and entertainment. There are very few physical activities at these centres to keep students active and agile. Students often face high anxiety and stress issues.

In recent years, the mental health of students at these centres has gained a lot of attention because of the soaring suicide rates. The 2014 report published by the National Crime Records Bureau ("Kota Witnessed," 2015) found that the rate of suicides in Kota is higher than the national average of 10.6 suicides per one hundred thousand (100,000) people (Mishra & Singh, 2017). The series of student suicides has been on a steady and alarming rise across India, especially in recent years.

Every year, one student commits suicide in India, with about 28 such suicides reported every day, according to data compiled by the National Crime Bureau

Records (NCRB). The NCRB data shows that 10,159 students died by suicide in 2018, an increase from 9,905 in 2017, and 9,478 in 2016. (Garai, 2020, para. 2) The numbers highlight the growth of student suicides in the country. As per the data collected by the Kota District Administration, coaching centres have been a witness to 58 student suicides between 2013–2017 (Garai, 2020). Though the numbers in Kota might seem insignificant in comparison to the total number of suicides in the country, it is important to vouch for the practices of coaching centres to ensure these numbers do not increase with time.

The organizational structure and the *modus operandi* affects students' lives most directly. In economic terms, this is referred to as negative externalities (Becker, 1993). An externality in economics is a side-effect of an action that could potentially be a cost (negative) or a benefit (positive), beyond the actor's awareness (Munich & Psacharopoulos, 2018). For instance, the present education system could lead to decreased crime rates in the future, creating a positive externality or it could pose the problem of job insecurity due to constant technological improvements, creating a negative externality. The following section of the paper provides some of these documented problems and their basis.

History of the Kota Coaching Industry

Kota is a city of just over one million inhabitants, situated in the northwestern part of India (Orberg, 2018). The city laid the foundation for the coaching industry in India in the 1980s. Mr. V. K. Bansal, himself an IIT-Delhi graduate, worked as an engineer at the J. K. Synthetics factory in Kota since 1971. In the late 1980s, the factory shut down, and most of the people's employment was terminated overnight. Bansal was also diagnosed

with muscular dystrophy that affected his physical movement (Mishra, 2009). In his attempt to do something for himself and the society, he thought of starting private tuitions at home.

Bansal decided to tutor children ambitious of going to the IIT. He started providing math tuitions to students at his home. Success came early and the numbers of students increased over time. The tutoring business grew and the private tuition classes took the form of a coaching centre. Endorsements helped his business and the attraction of coaching centres for prospective IIT students. The tale of coaching centres came into the limelight when one of his students, Sanjeev Arora, passed the IIT-JEE (now JEE-Advanced) in 1986 and credited the success of his selection to the coaching received at the Bansal classes (Mishra & Singh, 2017). Subsequently, 13 more of his students also qualified for the test in 1990. From a small home-run coaching business, 14 students in a span of 5 years was considered an achievement. Coaching centres became immensely popular throughout the country.

In his examination of the Bansal model, Acharjee (2015) reports that Bansal Classes became a pioneer brand that changed the identity of Kota city from an industrial ghost town to a thriving coaching hub. Ever 1991 coaching centres attracted students like bees to honey. Singh (2018) asserts nearly two lac children study in Kota in the city's top 12 coaching institutes. These students migrate to Kota every year to receive the best coaching in the country and get admission into the IITs. The coaching centres gradually transformed after ER91 into residential institutions where students would stay for a specific time (normally 1 to 2 years) and devote their lives to preparing for the JEE-Advanced. Generally, students enrol into these centres in Kota in the 11th grade and spend 2 years preparing for the exam (Iqbal, 2018).

To be successful in passing the exam, students follow a strict schedule for their studies. They are away from their families and other distractions. Sengupta (2014) informs that, in recent years, coaching centres have started enrolling students as early as Grade 6, which amounts to over 6 years of coaching. Most of the students are in their teens (i.e., 15–17) but in recent years students as young as 11 have been admitted to the coaching centres. However, as Mehra (2018) argues, every student registered in the coaching centres does not possess the aptitude required for the JEE-Advanced but the business model for many coaching centres is large enrolments. Therefore, coaching centres are dealing with a huge number of students, who are the vulnerable population.

Orberg's (2018) assessment of the functioning of the coaching centres highlights a general trend followed by coaching centres in Kota. The teaching pedagogy of coaching centres (see Figure 5) for most coaching programs includes six distinct steps:

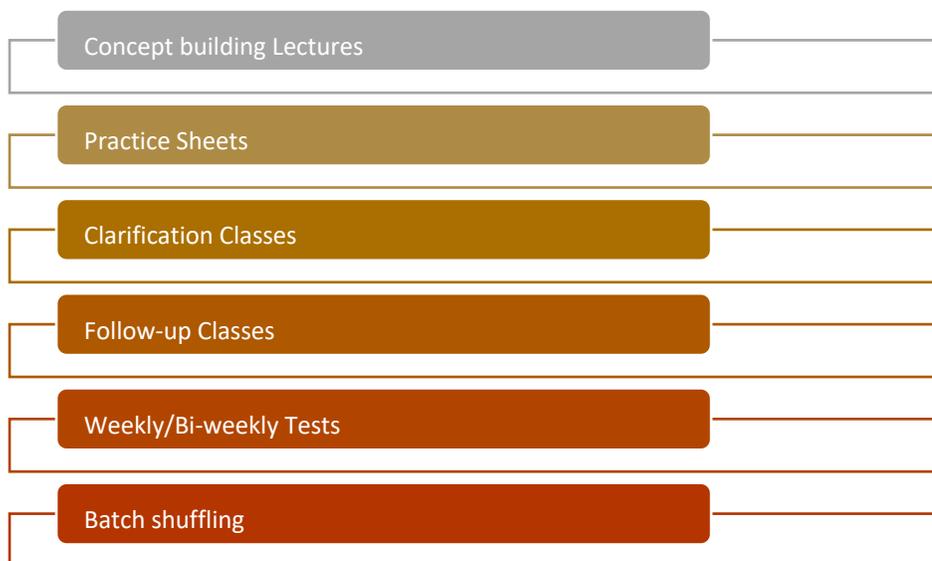
- Concept-building lectures
- Practice sheets
- Clarification classes
- Follow-up classes
- Weekly/biweekly tests
- Batch shuffling

The main aim of coaching centres is to conduct concept-building lectures for students to strengthen the fundamentals of Science and Mathematics which are primarily tested in JEE-Advanced exam. The lectures align with the syllabus and pattern of the exam. Once the concepts are clear, students are provided with a variety of practice sheets to get well-versed with the different types of questions. Clarification classes (or doubt-removal

sessions, as they are popularly called) are mainly conducted by junior faculty at the coaching institutes to discuss the students' problems. Follow-up classes are organized to revise topics for students and act as a good means of brushing up on their fundamentals. Coaching centres organize weekly or biweekly tests to track the progress of their students. The parents are also informed about their academic progress. Batch shuffling is a popular strategy adopted by coaching institutions to motivate students. Based on the performance in weekly/biweekly tests, students are promoted/demoted to higher/lower batches at these centres.

Mishra (2009) informs us that towns like Kota have become coaching factories, claiming to prepare hundreds of successful IIT applicants. The fancy taglines of coaching centres sell the IIT dream yet hide the dark side of the factory system. It is indeed challenging for young teenagers to confront the harsh realities of life at such a tender age and to experience many setbacks and disappointments. The level of competition and the uncertainty involved towards the successful transition from the coaching centres into the IITs makes this process arduous and stressful for the students. Suicide notes by students have disclosed their inability to deal with the burden of fulfilling the surmounting expectations from their parents and the fear of letting them down. While some students manage to deal with the high expectations, others succumb to the excessive pressure imposed on them. Mehra's (2018) analysis of Kota and other coaching classes informs us:

Coaching classes are unregulated, which means that administrators and teachers can indulge in all kinds of discrimination in the name of "brilliance" (or lack of it)—performance-shaming, scolding, taunting—all adding up to feeling of inadequacy and worthlessness. (para. 6)

Figure 5*Teaching Pedagogy of Coaching Centres in Kota*

Note. Source: Orberg (2018, p. 137).

The unregulated coaching classes and schedules lead to different kinds of discrimination towards students by administrators and faculty members. Although the District administration in Kota has been showing concerns about the functioning of coaching centres (Singh, 2018), its role in providing oversight and regulation of these centres has always remained passive. Mehra (2018) further states “Government agencies have been expressing their ‘concerns’ about coaching for a long time now, with promises to curb this ‘menace’ but nothing has really happened: a nexus of business and political actors ensures that things chug along merrily” (para. 8). Thus, it is nearly impossible to break the vicious circle of coaching centres for the Government agencies.

Over the past 40 years, Kota has emerged as the coaching capital of India. Indeed, Kota promotes itself as “the *education city*” in India (Orberg, 2018, p. 136; emphasis in original). Prior to these reforms, the coaching centres were an ad hoc cottage industry but after the reforms, a much more formal structure came into existence, and coaching centres as we now know them emerged in Kota. In 2011, the coaching centres in Kota reported the success rate of 10% percent for getting their students admissions into the IITs as against the national success rate of three percent (ET Bureau, 2011). The coaching centres in other parts of the country, collectively, have a success rate of only 3% in getting their candidates admission into the IITs. Kota, on the other hand, has the documented rate of 10%, the highest amongst its competition. The top five coaching institutes—Bansal Classes, Resonance Eduventures, Career Point, Vibrant Academy, and Allen Career Institute—enrol maximum students and contribute to a majority of these successful candidates (Mishra & Singh, 2017). The coaching centres in Kota are thereby touted as the best for successfully passing the JEE-Advanced for students across India.

The mounting success of Bansal classes have resulted in their coaching centres starting in many parts of the city. Mishra (2009) asserts that the Bansal empire has spread to over 16 cities worldwide. Combined with spin-off businesses, the coaching centres have become the chief employer in the community.

ET Bureau (2011) shares some highlights on the ancillary businesses that are operating alongside coaching centres in Kota:

Today, nearly 80,000 students at Kota have created an eco-system that supports an entire city. It's not only the coaching classes, but ancillaries like accommodation, canteens, cybercafés, stationery shops etc., that earn revenues from students. On an average, each student spends Rs 1.25 lakh [\$2,213 CAD] every year, out of which 40% goes to the coaching classes. (para. 8)

Therefore, it is evident that many livelihoods depend on the coaching centres and their offshoots. In other words, the coaching industry has ultimately become the lifeline of the city.

Students pay a substantial amount to coaching centres. Since most of the students are from places that are not from daily commuting distances, the additional living expenses are also borne by students and their families. The cost of boarding, lodging, and transportation almost doubles the total cost of receiving coaching. The 2012 report by the Asian Development Bank estimated the coaching industry at \$110 million CAD. Subsequently, the coaching industry in India is worth \$40 billion with a potential of increasing at 15% every year (Bray & Lykins, 2012). The numbers are a massive indicator of the growing popularity for coaching centres among the students in successive generations. An abbreviated history of the coaching centres provides the context and the scale within which the operations of the coaching centres can be understood and the organizational theories can be applied to understand the details.

The next section presents the organizational literature that will help understand how these coaching centres are structured as an organization. Knowledge of the structure is essential for the analysis and understanding of these organizations.

Connecting Organizational Theory to Practice

Organizations around the world work upon different conceptual notions. Various theories form the basis for organizational structures to flourish. A theory is described as a systematic body of knowledge that helps to explain a certain phenomenon (Owens & Valesky, 2014). Conversely, practice means how theory is being implemented or how thoughts or ideas can be put into action. Both theory and practice create a loop where one feeds the other and in return is informed by it and the cyclic nature persists *ad infinitum*. Hence, theory can inform (or be informed by) practice and vice versa.

Owens and Valesky (2014) argue that organizational structures manifest in the nature of organizations and the behaviour of people working in them. They further believe that organizations can be broadly categorized as hierarchical, bureaucratic systems on the one hand and collegial, collaborative systems on the other which are the key components of the Human Relations Approach (Owens & Valesky, 2014). A bureaucratic approach is a conventional approach that believes in the idea that follows the so-called factory model, which emphasizes on setting clear plans and standard rules that guide action. It is the most commonly used approach, one that is considered preferable for exercising control and coordination in the organizations (Owens & Valesky, 2014). The human relations approach, in contrast, goes beyond the rigidity of the factory model and aims to involve the most dynamic element in the organization. It is often referred to as the human resources-based approach of management.

Organizations, before coming into existence, are imagined and formulated in the minds of people. Ideas help to lay the foundation for physical organizational structures. Therefore, the human dimension plays a prominent role in the formation of the organizations. This understanding and appreciation of the human approach was ushered in after the success of the Hawthorne experiment, conducted by the Western Electric Company in Illinois, near Chicago. It was discovered that observation and supervision could have a huge impact on the productivity of the people at work. Owens and Valesky (2015) argue that human variability is an essential determinant of productivity in organizations. People can make or break an organization. Skinner (1981) notes that people are the greatest asset for an organization. Managers have accepted this over time but the problem lies in managing the human resources efficiently. The Hawthorne experiment was a major force behind this shift.

The observation and monitoring approach within organizations helps us understand the approach taken up in the coaching centres. They rely heavily on close monitoring, encroaching on surveillance. But that is not the only organizational theory literature that informs the operation of the coaching industry. The remainder of the chapter highlights some of the pertinent theories through a critical lens to identify the concepts that contribute to the functioning of the private coaching centres in question.

The Kota coaching industry can be understood to have three distinct components. The first component incorporates the structural, organizational elements that have contributed to building the robust coaching industry. This is useful in understanding the formal and non-formal organizations, the presence of school and non-school factors and the dimensions of organizations (both structural and contextual). The internal structure of

coaching centres varies and is hard to analyze without access to the organizational structures. This information is not available on public facing sites and informational material. There has been a remarked absence of it in the reports that have informed this research (Bawa, 2017; Mehra, 2018; Orberg, 2018; The Quint, 2016; Singh, 2018). Consequently, what can be commented on is the organizational context of oversight and accountability, as advocated by bureaucratic theories and the scientific management models. Part of the reason for the of absence of this information is because of the nature of these organizations. In one way of understanding, these can be understood as non-formal organizations that follow a semi-structured organizational framework. These structures incorporate certain formal elements while falling outside the purview of the formal system. The presence of school and non-school factors is of significant importance while analyzing these structures. School factors refer to those factors that can be controlled by the organization. For instance, determining the teaching pedagogy of the coaching centres. Non-school factors refer to those factors that cannot be controlled by the organization. For instance, forcing a sleep-deprived child to be attentive in the classroom.

The second component represents the role of administrative staff and faculty who run the coaching centres. The principles of scientific management by Frederick W. Taylor provides the basis for the administrative staff and faculty to function at the coaching centres. Their main aim is to maintain the highest level of efficiency. There is a clear distinction between the job undertaken by the administrative staff and faculty. Both use the rule of standardization to excel at their work and follow a clear division of responsibility.

Finally, the third element examines the impact of coaching centres on the lives of students. The students are the focal point of consideration for the coaching centres. The coaching industry thrives on students. The coaching centres apply the elements of Theory X by providing them with the best resources, directing their efforts towards the desired goal and creating a highly disciplined and competitive environment for students to excel with their preparation. However, coaching centres forget to acknowledge their mental health in the process which has led to a series of suicide cases in Kota in the last few years. There is a need to identify their needs and adopt the ethic of care in the educational practice of the coaching centres.

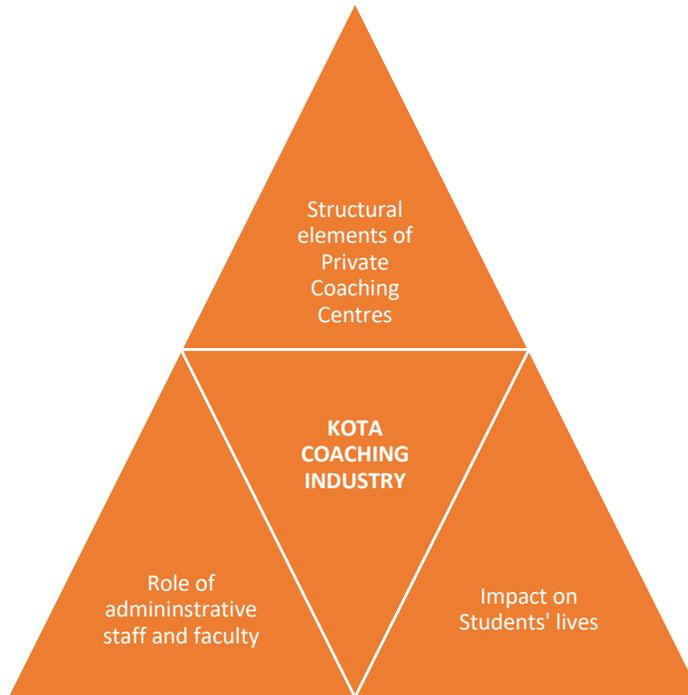
Structural Elements of Private Coaching Centres

It is a widely accepted sentiment among the public that is posited as a fact that a student can only pass the engineering entrance exam if he/she gets the requisite coaching. Mehra (2018) asserts it is impossible to do well in the JEE without coaching, especially given the deficiencies of learning inside schools. Thus, there exists a large market, of the order of many lakhs, for JEE coaching.

Such is the hype created by the media and the popularity of IITs among the Indian population. There may be exceptional cases where students have qualified the exam through self-study. There are many factors that have contributed to this sentiment. For instance, the coaching industry has gained expertise in attracting parents and potential students through a variety of enticing advertisements. Moreover, business organizations aid in formulating and implementing a variety of promotional activities of the coaching centres. The aim is to sell the IIT dream to aspiring future engineers.

Figure 6

The Kota Coaching Industry



There is no singular best way of creating organizations (Hoy & Miskel, 2013). Every organization intends to incorporate elements that are best suited for its fundamental setup and functioning. The coaching centres incorporate both formal and non-formal aspects of an organizational structure. Coombs and Ahmed (1974) introduced a model of education and learning to highlight the horizontal integration of education and learning at different levels in an organization. They emphasized three forms of education/learning, namely: formal, non-formal, and informal organizations.

Formal education is highly institutionalized, chronologically graded, and hierarchically structured. Typically, educational systems range from primary school through middle and high school to postsecondary institutions such as the university, institutes of technology, and colleges. The non-formal educational organization is an organized, systematic, educational activity that lies outside the purview of the formal system, the purpose of which is to provide special types of learning to specific populations. The informal education accounts for the lifelong learning process through which every person acquires and accumulates knowledge, skills, attitudes, and insights from their experiences and other environmental factors. Informal education is highly unorganized and unsystematic as every person has a unique set of experiences. Yet, informal education plays a crucial role in determining the overall learning process of an individual.

The coaching industry in Kota follows a semi-structured organizational framework that has elements of both formal and non-formal organizations. The non-formal structure tries to mimic some of the basic traits of the formal organization to build a foundation but exploits the loopholes in the system for its benefit. For instance, most of

the coaching centres publish their mission and vision statements on their websites but do not provide details about their practices. Seldom are they audited or held accountable other than the results they produce. Moreover, as pointed out by Mehra (2018), coaching centres remain unregulated despite the concerns raised by the government agencies.

Mehra claims that coaching centres charge high fees, ask for donations from parents, treat faculty members unfairly, and employ a batch-shuffling system of students. Until recently, there was no regulatory body to guide coaching centres. Because of the growing criticism of lack of a government body to fix accountability of coaching centres (Bawa, 2017; Mehra, 2018; Orberg, 2018; The Quint, 2016; Singh, 2018), the District administration established certain guidelines to initiate fee refunds or provide exit policy to students who wish to drop out of the coaching centres mid-way. But there is still a lot of work to be done. The coaching centres tend to take undue advantage of the distorted education system.

To understand organizations, Daft (2009) classified organizations into two dimensions of organizations: structural and contextual. The structural dimension is the kind of description that explicates an organization akin to the physical traits that describe a person. The structural dimension involves the basis for documented material that guides the organization operations to function smoothly and efficiently. The structural aspects include the following:

1. Formalization: It is the number of written documents (vision, mission, plans, policies, job descriptions) established by an organization. It guides behaviour and activities in an organization in the proper direction. For instance, the websites and

brochures created by the coaching centres highlight their vision and mission to serve the students for successfully transitioning to the IITs.

2. **Specialization:** It is the degree to which organizational tasks are divided into separate jobs. If an organization is dealing with a wide range of activities, specialization would be low. Activities would be generalized in nature. If an organization has limited activities, it will involve a high degree of specialization. It will try to gain expertise in the activities being performed. Coaching centres usually have a high degree of specialization. There are some coaching centres dedicated to providing subject-specific training for JEE-Advanced. This often depends upon the expertise of the faculty at these centres. While some of the coaching centres prepare students for all subjects (i.e., Physics, Chemistry, and Mathematics), most of the coaching centres target prospective students based on their core area of specialization.
3. **Standardization:** It is the extent to which a similar work or activity can be performed in a uniform manner. It enables the organization to maintain the same level of efficiency and productivity. Mainstream educational institutions follow a standard format for their functioning. Coaching centres, by virtue of being unregulated, are less standardized in structure. The coaching centres tend to undertake standardization based on the role adopted by their administrators.
4. **Hierarchy of Authority:** It lays down the path that can be adopted by the organization to deal with its people. It describes “who should report to whom” and prescribes the span of control (number of subordinates a supervisor can manage at a given time) for each activity. Coaching centres follow the top-down

model of authority where the decision-making power lies with the top management. In certain exceptional circumstances, bottom-up approach is used where faculty members have immense popularity among students or possess expertise in their subject.

5. **Complexity:** It refers to the number of sub-activities undertaken in an organization. It can be vertical (different levels in a hierarchy), horizontal (different job titles), or Z-dimension (other geographical sites). If the activities undertaken in an organization are highly complex, the span of control will be high and vice versa. Coaching centres have comparatively less complex than mainstream educational institutions. In recent years, the popularity of coaching centres has led to creation of numerous branches across the country and abroad.
6. **Centralization:** It is prescribing the hierarchical level of authority in the organization. The power is exercised from top to bottom. The superior has the decision-making power vested in him/her, whereas the subordinates are bound to follow the command of the supervisor. Most of the coaching centres are centralized in nature. Moreover, in recent years, coaching centres have turned into popular family business where power is transferred to the next generation in the family, irrespective of the skills and knowledge he/she possesses.

The contextual dimensions of an organization describe other aspects that are equally relevant in understanding the organization. They are akin to the personality of the person. Merely looking at the structural elements will provide a bird's-eye view of the functioning of an organization. It is essential to study and analyze the context within

which the structural dimensions operate, both within and outside the organization. Some of the contextual dimensions are as follows:

1. **Size:** It refers to the size of the organization and includes the number of divisions or branches it holds. It also involves the number of employees working in an organization. The smaller the size, the less complicated, is the organizational structure. Coaching centres that laid their foundation stone in the early 1990s have contributed immensely to the overall success of the coaching industry. Most of them have opened branches nationally and internationally to provide coaching services. Besides coaching, they also provide accommodation to its students that expands their size, both in terms of infrastructure and people working at these centres.
2. **Organizational Technology:** Technology includes the tools and techniques used by an organization to convert inputs into outputs. The technology used by an organization determines how the inputs will be processed. For instance, if an organization chooses to opt for manual books of accounts over computerized systems, it will be more time-consuming. Most of the coaching centres in Kota are equipped with the latest technological infrastructure. Students are trained using physical resources such as books or manuals, and online resources including test banks, mock tests and more.
3. **Environment:** All the elements that lie outside the physical boundaries of an organization can be termed as its environment. It can take the shape of political, economic, socio-cultural, and legal elements. For instance, a new regulation passed by the government could alter the normal functioning of an organization.

In 2012, the government drafted a rule stipulating the need for being in the top twenty percentile in the school-leaving examinations alongside JEE-Advanced to secure admission to the IITs (Sengupta, 2014). Even though this rule did not take legal shape, the dummy school culture came into limelight. Coaching centres often tie up with local school where students are enrolled just to ensure their ability to appear for the Grade 12 examinations. Mainstream education is sidelined by the excessive pressure placed by the functioning of these coaching centres.

4. **Strategies and Goals:** It enables us to define the purpose and competitive techniques that can set the organization apart from its competitors. The structural dimensions will help to establish a clear set of goals and strategies for the organization. While one could view goals as the end destination, strategies are the means that lead to goals. Coaching centres continue to work on formulating and implementing new strategies to attract students. For instance, promoting popular faculty members as a representative for the institute, creating advertisements highlighting success stories of past students, comparison with other centres are some of the strategies used by the coaching centres.
5. **Organizational Culture:** It is the underlying set of critical values, beliefs, understanding, and norms established by an organization's employees. It is simple to understand this from the perspective of our families. Every family follows a specific set of values and beliefs that reflects through their behaviour and actions. This allows creating a distinction between different families. The same applies to organizations. Coaching centres promote a highly disciplined and structured

lifestyle for its students. There are numerous restrictions placed on students during their stay at the centres. Special wardens are hired to vouch for the daily routine of students. A competitive atmosphere is created where every student strives to achieve the best results.

Together, these two dimensions help understand the organization, which is an essential component in analyzing and critiquing one. In case of JEE Advanced coaching centres, these two dimensions will aid in understanding what are the different challenges that lie in these organizations and where does opportunities exist. With that, a partial picture will emerge. To understand the human aspect, the role of administrators and the faculty needs to be understood as well. The next section describes some fundamental literature related to these aspects.

Role of Administrative Staff and Faculty

An organization is a combination of financial and material resources and human resources put together to ensure its smooth functioning in the long run. Financial resources like capital or money are essential for starting an organization and also ensuring its continued longevity. Physical resources like land, building, machines, tools, and technology create the basis for any organization to perform its activities efficiently. Both fiscal and physical resources are determinant in nature, meaning that an organization can expand or contract depending upon the availability of these resources. However, the most dynamic and complex of all resources is the human resource. For many decades since the inception of administration as a field of study, human resources were the most neglected resource, but since about the 1960s in the Western context (and in the 1980s in places like India) organizations have realized its growing importance.

Saini and Budhwar (2004) explains the impact of economic liberalization in 1991 on the growth of human resources in India:

Liberalisation of the Indian economy has resulted in sudden and increased levels of competition for Indian firms from international firms. At the same time, it has also created opportunities for resource mobilization from new sources. HRM [Human Resource Management] issues have now become more important with the firms' adoption of strategies of expansion, diversification, turnaround and internationalization. These developments have direct implications for HRM in India and the Indian HR function is under severe pressure to bring about large-scale structural changes in order to cope with the challenges brought about by economic liberalization. (p. 43)

The increasing demand for human resources is because of the impact of human behaviour upon the functioning of the organizations. From the perspective of the coaching industry, the faculty and administrative staff have gained significant prominence as they play a crucial role in the success of the coaching centres. The coaching industry reflects the principles of scientific management in various aspects. The same scrutiny could be applied to the coaching industry. More on that in Chapter 3.

Owens and Valesky (2014) believe that organizations that seek higher efficiency tend to follow Frederick W. Taylor's scientific management principles when it comes to administration. Taylor believed that human labour was analogous to machine work and thus had the potential to be engineered to achieve the desired level of efficiency (Koumparoulis & Solomos, 2012). The four principles propounded by Taylor revolutionized the functioning of the modern organizational structure:

1. It eliminated the guesswork of rule of thumb approaches and employed the

principle of division of work. It was an attempt to avoid any uncertainty involved in describing a particular job for an employee. It stressed upon dividing significant tasks into smaller jobs to ensure ease in allocating and assessing the performance of workers. The top-level management hires teachers and administrators for the smooth functioning of the coaching centres. The work assigned to each of them is broken into smaller tasks to ensure successful completion of work in a standardized manner.

2. The use of more scientific and systematic methods was considered for the training and development of workers for specific jobs. This ensured a high degree of specialization and improved employee morale to a greater extent. Every coaching centre promotes itself to be the best among its competitors. The reason being the underlying strategies they tend to adopt. Coaching centres often assign the most difficult subjects to teachers possessing expertise. For instance, organic chemistry is considered to be one of the difficult subjects for JEE-Advanced for decades. Coaching centres try to invest in the top-notch faculty members, ideally ex-IITians (who graduated from IITs themselves or retired working from IITs) to teach at their centres to not only achieve the best results but also maintaining it.
3. Clear division of responsibility between management and workers was established to avoid overlapping of work. It also ensured that management or administration focused upon planning, supervision and monitoring activities, whereas workers concentrate on the execution of the required tasks for achieving goals. There is a clear distinction in the tasks and duties allocated to each of the teachers and administrators working at the coaching centres. While faculty members solely focus on the academic side of these centres, administrators act as

a link between the students and faculty members, as and when required.

Administrators perform the task of conducting counselling sessions for students, navigate the admission process successfully, creating rules and procedures, and solve different student-issues from time to time.

4. Establishing discipline to ensure management sets the right objectives and workers cooperate to achieve them in a specific period. Students are tested on a weekly/bi-weekly basis to ensure consistency of their performance. Mock tests are conducted on a national level frequently by different coaching centres to provide feedback to students and also highlight areas of improvement. Similarly, the performance of faculty members is also reviewed over a period of time to ensure they are putting their best efforts to boost the success rate of students transitioning into the IITs from their centres.

In summary, scientific management stressed at the exclusion of other considerations, the outcome-based principles. It also emphasized achieving the highest level of productivity in the least amount of time. Monitoring one's progress throughout the duration of the work was also an important consideration.

The main aim of coaching centres is to ensure a maximum number of students pass the JEE-Advanced and seek admission into the IITs. This in itself is not bad or problematic, but when the centres lay blame on parents for not succeeding, as was evident in the short description of the operations of the Kota centre, then it is a sign that scientific management has been escalated to unintended levels. As shown in the documentary *Why Kota Kills* by The Quint (2016), the Director of Allen Institute states, "Parents have very high expectations. They think dropping their child off at Allen is all

they need to do. They need to keep motivating their children. Who's closest to a child? Their parents! Parents should counsel the children.” When the monitoring of the coaching centres is upon the success of JEE-Advanced, the faculty at the coaching centres create specific course material determined at preparing students for the exam. The chief component is monitoring of students and faculty at the coaching centres. The raison d'être of the coaching centres is to teach for the test, unlike more conventional schools where pupils learn the fundamentals and build their conceptual understanding.

For advertisement and reputational reasons, coaching centres make a great effort to recruit and employ IIT graduates and faculty (Orberg, 2018). These employees (instructors) had previously studied at the IIT or worked there but are now working at the coaching centres. They are the most coveted and become an important factor in the promotional and advertisement material. The marketing strategy of coaching centres invests heavily on promoting the quality of their instructors, especially teachers who come from an IIT background, to draw more students to their centres. These faculty members are ranked from time to time, based on their success rate and popularity among students. Their salary packages are determined based on these same factors.

Similarly, the role of administrative staff is vital to provide proper direction, support, and leadership to the overall functioning of the coaching centres. There is a clear distinction in the role of faculty and administrative staff. While faculty members are solely expected to focus on the academic part, the administrative staff strives to support the motive through the non-academic counterparts, such as providing the right infrastructure, determining the course material for the exam, preparing practice sheets and revision manuals, and more. The front-end administrative staff plays a crucial role in

determining the marketability of the centres. They undergo training to deliver the expected performance while interacting with parents and students. All these operational decisions, practices, and personnel have a direct effect on students' lives (Mehra, 2018).

Impact on Students' Lives

The coaching centres promote the idea of providing better infrastructure and a positive learning environment that leads to the success of their students. Since these private institutions survive on tuition revenue from the students who enroll in them, the financial maw of these organizations needs constant feeding. Therefore, the coaching centres invest heavily in advertisement and marketing, including making spurious or unsupported claims, such as that the living conditions of students are ideal for learning and free of distractions. The connection between marketing and student success is conjoint at the coaching centres. The more students succeed, the greater the validity in advertising the coaching centres and vice versa. Humans are social beings who have an urge to communicate with others for their satisfaction. Owens and Valesky (2015) affirms that organizational behaviour is a combination of individual and group efforts. For any organization to excel, both need to be balanced.

The coaching centres in Kota present a different case as far as individual or group interactions are concerned. It is a common practice that most students who enroll in coaching move to where the centres are located, such as Kota. The impressionable years (15–17 years of age) are spent away from their families (Sengupta, 2014). The extensive training that they undertake at the coaching centres comes with a social cost associated with it. Although there exist perceived benefits in terms of getting admission into the prestigious IITs and better career prospects, the rigorous and intense training regimen at

the coaching centres distances students from the world around them. Experiencing such a turmoil in the early teenage years tends to have a lifelong impact on the lives of students. Moreover, the physical and mental well-being of students at coaching centres has always remained questionable.

A typical day (sample schedule) in the life of a student enrolled at a coaching centre in Kota hardly leaves any time for proper eating, sleeping, or any recreational activities (see Table 6). The classes are conducted throughout the day to build a strong foundation for students for JEE-Advanced, which comprises three subjects: Mathematics, Physics, and Chemistry. The time between classes is often utilized to solve various practice sheets or visit the clarification desks to clear their doubts. Follow-up classes are conducted for revision of topics. Every student is required to appear for the weekly or biweekly tests conducted by the coaching centres. Their marks are reflected on notice boards on a regular basis. The parents are also informed about their child's progress. Most students stay away from their families and at such a tender age it is difficult to navigate throughout the process single-handedly.

This is where ethic of care comes into perspective. Noddings (2007) states "There is much to be gained, both academically and humanly, by including themes of care in our curriculum" (p. 1). In the process of commercialization, coaching centres have adopted strategies that strive for the materialistic goals of academic success. An important element of education that strives to work towards holistic development of students is ignored. While they do help some students to successfully transition to the institutions of their choice, there are many other students who fail to perform well in their exams.

Table 6*A Typical Day in the Life of a Student in Kota*

Time	Task
5:00 a.m.	Start the day with the reminder of the countdown for JEE-Advanced (50 days to go) and prepare for the day
6:00–9:00 a.m.	Attend morning classes for Mathematics
10:00–11:00 a.m.	Solve practice test sheets
11:00–12:00 p.m.	Attend clarification classes
1:00–4:00 p.m.	Attend afternoon classes for Chemistry
4:00–5:00 p.m.	Attend follow-up classes if required or solve practice test sheets
6:00–9:00 p.m.	Attend evening classes for Physics
9:00–12:00 p.m.	Prepare for weekly/biweekly tests

Note. The JEE-Advanced involves preparation in three subjects: Mathematics, Chemistry, and Physics.

Educators have a responsibility to inculcate values of care in the students by providing constant support and attention. By including themes of care at different stages and forms in the educational process, educators can ensure that students embrace caring for self, intimate others and the natural world. There is a strong need for analyzing the functioning of the coaching centres and incorporate elements of care to ensure student issues are given its due importance. More on the ethic of care is discussed in Chapter 3. But to understand ethic of care, it is important to study organizational theories upon which such centres tend to function. For students, specifically, the coaching centres adopt the elements of Theory X.

The coaching centres tend to employ the elements of Theory X while preparing students for the JEE-Advanced exam. Matteson and Ivancevich (1993) believe that Theory X follows the conventional view of management, devoid of motivation. It highlights three major assumptions:

1. An organization's management is responsible for setting the elements of a productive and efficient enterprise, employing all resources in the best possible manner. The coaching centres intend to provide the best infrastructure, course material and recruit the best faculty for training the students for the JEE-Advanced. The coaching centres create a competitive environment for students to put in their best efforts. Faculty members and administration work closely to ensure all the requisite resources are made available to the students in time.
2. An organization can understand, motivate, direct and channelize the efforts of its people towards the desired goal. The coaching centres lay down certain structural elements that govern the functioning of the coaching centres. Students are

directed to undertake responsibility for the efforts they put into preparing for the JEE-Advanced. Regular tests and section-shuffling system motivates them to perform better.

3. If the organization does not interfere, people will remain passive and resistant to their personal and organizational needs. It is an underlying human tendency to lack ambition and responsibility if proper direction and discipline are not provided from time to time. The coaching centres, right from the beginning create a competitive environment for students to encourage them to participate in the training process actively. Counselling sessions are conducted throughout the coaching duration. They are provided with different resources and opportunities to work upon their individual strengths and weaknesses.

Students are the magnet upon which the entire coaching industry continues to thrive. It is imperative to focus on their well-being while they are trained for JEE-Advanced. Students often miss out on some of the fundamental life lessons during this insidious training process. In the past few years, Kota has also become the suicide capital of India (The Quint, 2016). There lies a moral responsibility that the coaching centres ought to shoulder at this point. The coaching centres must stop indulging in the blame game and adopt measures to overcome this problem. Furthermore, an ethical consideration is required to review the functioning of the coaching centres.

The three elements (i.e., structural element of private coaching centres; role of administration and staff; and impact on students' lives) present a hidden picture of the coaching industry in Kota. This multi-million-dollar industry that strives to expand its business by attracting/directing/preparing students into/for IITs should halt and analyze

its practices and the impact it has on the lives of teenagers. Every life is precious and suicide should not be the only option students look for. Every organizational structure comes with a set of shortcomings. The role of faculty members is inarguably important. Some of the popular faculty members acquire power by virtue of their status and reputation. They can contribute towards breaking the vicious circle of gambling and make a difference to the lives of thousands of students. Parents also need to understand and acknowledge the aptitude of their children before they decide to send them to the coaching centres.

Chapter Summary

Education is considered as a link between the past, present, and future (Dutta, 2018). The rise of the coaching industry poses a significant challenge to the fundamentals of education. It questions the ideology of mainstream education that has been existing for decades. The concept of shadow education highlighted by the Asian Development Bank Report has become quite prominent in India. The mushrooming of the coaching centres in Kota is an exemplary instance. It is amusing how these coaching centres adopt the semi-formal organizational structure and frame their standards. An attempt has been made to link organizational theory to practice. Three main dimensions have been discussed that impact the Kota coaching industry, namely: the structural elements of the private coaching centres, the role of administrative staff and faculty, and the impact on the lives of students.

CHAPTER THREE: CONCLUSION, RECOMMENDATIONS, AND IMPLICATIONS

In this era of globalization in which educational institutions strive for academic excellence, there is a strong need for shifting their attitude from over-emphasizing academic achievement as their core value and profit-making as their end result/ultimate goal to being more empathetic towards the needs of the students. Internationally, educators, especially teachers and instructors, work with the primary motive of delivering high academic performance. Their task is not an easy one. Most higher education institutions, irrespective of the country, focus on students' academic achievement, using improved test scores as a primary measure of achievement. From my personal teaching experience, this has been quite evident in the Indian education system. This also makes me question these institutions' narrow philosophy of education. The aim of education should be to nurture the young minds and contribute to their holistic development. This will not only make them better human beings but also active change agents in society.

The purpose of education should go far beyond academic achievement to shape our children and youth as sensible and rational beings who can lead from the forefront. Academic achievement alone cannot determine the future of our students. Nel Noddings, an American feminist, educator, and philosopher, views education as being central to the cultivation of caring in the society (Smith, 2020). When we include elements of caring into our education system, we create a mindset that embraces students for who they are and show appreciation towards them for becoming the best possible version of themselves. Educational institutions that base their values upon themes of care do not force students to run the rat race for achieving high test scores but empower them with the skills and knowledge to lead a wholesome life.

Noddings (2007) emphasizes the importance of caring as our educational goal:

When we care, we want to do our very best for the objects of our care. To have as our educational goal the production of caring, competent, loving, and lovable people is not anti-intellectual. Rather, it demonstrates respect for the full range of human talents. (p. 2)

There are vital life lessons for our students to be learned through our education systems. Our students are our future and to be able to navigate them into proper directions should be the long-term goal of educators.

The coaching industry in Kota has functioned with a singular focus on producing a greater number of students with exceptional test scores in JEE-Advanced, a prerequisite to gain admission into the Indian Institutes of Technology (IITs). Teachers, administrators, and even parents create boundaries for students enrolled in these centres that restrict them to realize their fullest potential. The research shows that these centres are working on the factory model of scientific management where the main focus is on producing successful candidates who can transition from coaching centres into the IITs. However, in recent years, an increasing number of mental health issues that students face during their stay in Kota has raised questions on the internal accountability of these semi-formal educational institutions. The social cost of the rigorous training process remains unexamined and is the inspiration behind this research.

When parents impose their unaccomplished dreams upon their children, the weight of high expectations affects the children's overall social, psychological, and intellectual development. The children are constantly worried about the outcomes of the academic tests rather than exploring their journey. Furthermore, faculty and

administrative staff also play a significant role in channeling their students' thoughts in the proper direction, which may be more than high test scores.

Lerner (2007) emphasizes the importance of care in education:

No matter where or what we teach, the goal to which our efforts should be aimed is to help our students lead good lives. Toward this end, we must care that they know right from wrong, desire what is noble, and exercise their will to act. (p. 7)

Firstly, there should be less emphasis on laying assumptions in our educational institutions that students know what is right and wrong. Educators should emphasize imparting fundamental lessons within the curriculum that provide students with a clarity about right and wrong. Secondly, students should be encouraged to align themselves toward the right thing and act in the same direction. Finally, students should be trained to take responsibility for their actions. All of these are vital elements for preparing our students to lead good lives.

By introducing themes of care, educators can create a strong sense of belonging for students while studying at various educational institutions. They can encourage students to build mutual trust with their faculty, with whom they are going to spend a majority of their time. This will not only help them to become confident beings but also freely express their concerns and issues as they arise. Smith (2020) describes the four key components of caring proposed by Nel Noddings: (a) modelling, (b) dialogue, (c) practice, and (d) confirmation. These components can be considered by educators to deal with a variety of student issues, especially the ones that are often ignored by educational institutions. This chapter further delves into highlighting the different issues and suggests recommendations based on the analysis of the Kota coaching industry.

Discussion

In this research, certain issues have surfaced from my analysis of the coaching centres in Kota. Given the complexity of these mystery boxes, I examined various public documents to explore how the structure of the coaching centres play a significant in determining the operations of these organizations. The semi-structured (semi-formal) nature of the coaching centres creates ample opportunities for these centres to take advantage of the shortcomings in the mainstream education system. The coaching centres are private institutions whose purpose is to provide a better quality of education as preparation centers for the JEE-Advanced examinations, with infrastructural and technological facilities that are superior to what students could access in the public schools. These centres charge a premium fee for the provision of these services.

The existence of such semi-structured organizations poses two challenges. One, these coaching centres and their superior supports pose a challenge for the formal education system to meet or exceed the quality of education being provided at these centres at a lower cost. The formal education system needs to meet and/or exceed the quality of education provided by these coaching centres or risk losing their support from the public and politicians. Moreover, parents prefer to send their children to coaching centres over formal schools to provide specialized training to their children, which is lacking in the mainstream education system. Two, the popular coaching centres increase the level of competition for the remaining coaching centres in the industry. In this chapter, I discuss the key issues that emerged in my research of Kota coaching centres, through the perspective of the three major components that comprise the Kota coaching industry. As discussed in Chapter 2, the three components include the structural elements

of private coaching centres, the role of administrative staff and faculty, and their impact on the lives of students. These key issues that surfaced from the analysis were:

- Complexity of organizational structure,
- Impact of the corporate model on formal education,
- Accessibility,
- Gender equality, and
- Student wellness and mental health.

The business model adopted by the coaching centres is a key element that is highlighted in the research. Mehra (2018) argues the coaching centres function with the aim of profit-maximization. Students are chiefly an input in a profit-generating machine. To ensure that the flow of funds does not get disrupted, these coaching centres undertake varied marketing strategies and activities to ensure that student numbers are maintained. The Kota coaching centres have mastered the art of selling the IIT dream to young aspirants and their parents through their aggressive advertisement campaigns that highlight only the brighter side or the positive outcomes of their services. As Orberg (2018) claims, with the increasing number of successful candidates from its many coaching centres, Kota is known popularly as the coaching capital of India.

For more than 30 years, gender equity in education and the economy has been central; goals of international development agencies such as UNESCO through the UN Millenium Development Goals and Sustainable Development Goals (United Nations, n.d.). Gender equity in STEM-related fields remains a highly charged topic, one that has been a topic of debate in the IITs. IITs have sought to increase the number and percentage of women participating in STEM disciplines. Mathews (2015) informs that

92% of the candidates who successfully secure admission into the IITs are males. In recent years, the India Ministry of Human Resource Development (MHRD) and the IITs have been trying to increase the number of institutions (IITs) and the number of seats available in the IITs with the purpose of providing more accessibility and also encouraging more students (especially girls) to apply for further education. Yet, the *2017 Joint Implementation Committee Report* (IITM, 2017) highlighted that only 995 female candidates (which is 9% of the total seats) were offered admission into the IITs. Gender imbalance still continues to reflect in the enrolment ratios.

The documentary *Why Kota Kills* (The Quint, 2016) highlights that the Kota coaching centres follow the footsteps of the IITs by working to attract the very best students in India. Yet, like the IITs, coaching centres too work on the model of “survival of the fittest.” The coaching centres focus on “toppers,” those secondary school students who are more likely to qualify for the JEE-Advanced. At coaching centres, students who excel at academics get special privileges, including access to the best faculty and subject material in the top-tier (Level A) batch, better accommodation facilities, around the clock access to the faculty helpline, and more (Orberg, 2018). The Kota coaching centres’ marketing agenda seeking to attract these top candidates.

However, most of the students face a culture shock when they come to Kota for their studies. These students are young, normally aged 15 to 17 years. Students feel lonely and homesick at these centres. Recognizing the high expectations of them by their parents and the large financial burden imposed on their parents to pay the coaching centres’ fees, these students refrain from telling their parents anything about their feelings or their achievement, unless they do well. Such pressures and stresses lead to significant

physical health and mental well-being issues. After a spate of suicides linked to students in these coaching centres in the recent past, Lakshmi (2016) observed that most students in these coaching centres live in a constant state of anxiety and high levels of stress.

As demonstrated below, from this analysis and discussion, 11 recommendations can be drawn, based on the three elements that comprise the Kota coaching industry. As illustrated by Acharjee (2015), the business model made Kota a million-dollar industry. The coaching centres operate with the aim of profit-making whereby students are the focal point of this process. In recent years, private supplementary education (“coaching centres” as termed by the Asian Development Bank (Bray & Lykins, 2012) has emerged as tough competition to the formal public institutions.

Deka (2019) studies the impact of coaching centres on mainstream education: Experts point out that until the early 1990s, most Indian doctors and engineers came from government schools. Today, there is a notable gap between public school education and what students are expected to achieve in college entrance examinations—leading to the rise of coaching institutes. (para. 5)

Therefore, there has been an increased demand in the number of coaching centres across the country since the Economic Reforms of 1991 (ER91).

The Asian Development Bank (ADB) report in 2012 disclosed that 83% of the high school students in India attend coaching classes in general (Bray & Lykins, 2012). This indicates that a high majority of students are enrolled in different types of coaching centres while they are registered in dummy schools. Shandaliya (2019) informs that the reason for increasing number of dummy schools lies in the curriculum. The school curriculum does not train the students for professional success in the entrance exams.

Therefore, there is a clear indicator of the increasing dependence on private institutions by parents over the public education system. Deka (2019) describes this dependency as reported by Technopak:

According to an estimate by Technopak, India's private coaching sector is currently [2019] a \$7.5 billion (Rs 51,712 crore) industry, up from \$1.7 billion (Rs 11,721 crore) in 2008. And though there is little published data to go by, estimates suggest the industry generates hundreds of thousands of jobs every year for teachers and support staff. Kota alone is home to 150,000 students from distant towns and villages who live and study at about 100 private coaching institutes in town. (Para. 8)

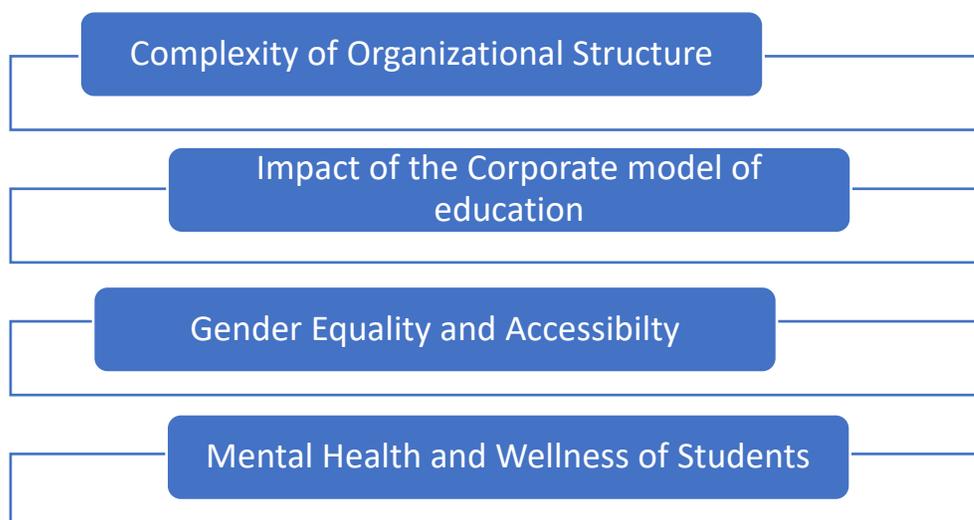
The immense popularity of the coaching industry and the innumerable aspirations associated with it makes it difficult to ignore the system. Hence, my recommendations below serve as the means to remove the negative aspects of the coaching centres and build better private institutions that can contribute to the overall growth and development of the nation.

Structural Elements of Private Coaching Centres

The organizational structure determines the functioning of an organization. It provides a framework for the organization within which it can operate. There are various structural dimensions like formalization, standardization, specialization, hierarchy of authority, complexity and centralization discussed in Chapter 2 (Daft, 2009). The research highlighted different issues that emerged out of these structural dimensions in the Kota analysis of coaching centres. Addressing the structural issues will ensure that the negative practices at the coaching centres are considerably reduced.

Figure 7

Key Issues Highlighted at the Coaching Centres



The recommendations from the viewpoint of the structural elements of the coaching centres include setting up a centralized regulatory body and registration or authorization of coaching centres.

1. The current organizational structure of coaching centres primarily exists because of the absence of a regulatory authority that would set standards of operations and expected outcomes. The central government, ideally the Ministry of Human Resource Development (MHRD), should create an adjudicating body under its purview to fix the poor practices of the coaching centres. Such a regulatory body will make the coaching centres more accountable about their practices and create more transparency in the system.
2. A regulatory body would need to know where and how many coaching centres exist and how they operate. The regulatory authority would mandate the registration or authorization of coaching centres and subject these centres to certain guidelines. Coaching centres failing to meet the eligibility criteria set out in the guideline would not be provided with the authorization to function. Such registration frameworks would promote transparency and accountability including, amongst others, compulsory public sharing of coaching centres' mission and vision statements, core values, code of ethics, and code of conduct. Annual reports must be required and published to show that they are fulfilling their purpose of providing the best coaching to their students.
3. A system of parallel coaching centres could be established by the government at subsidized fees to increase access opportunities for students from families with limited financial means and reduce the excessive commercialization of education

undertaken at the coaching centres. The proposed system of parallel coaching centres will make private coaching centres more cautious of their practices and encourage them to become more sensible towards the students.

Role of Administrative Staff and Faculty

The private coaching centres primarily operate on the corporate model of education—that is, as a business. The administration staff is held responsible for planning and implementing various marketing campaigns, managing admission processes, conducting counselling sessions for new and existing students. The faculty are responsible for providing specialized training and education (coaching) to the students to generate more ranks (successful students) from their centres in JEE-Advanced. The faculty and administration are trained and expected to contribute towards the ultimate motive of profit-maximization. More successful students lead to more marketing campaigns, and that further leads to more students seeking admissions into the coaching centres, thereby increasing their profits. All the activities are closely interconnected. However, while maintaining their fiduciary responsibilities, there is a need to shift their focus towards the overall development of the students.

1. Akin to the formal education system, periodic checks or audits must be conducted to review the operations of these coaching centres. This recommendation is inspired by one of the principles of scientific management that includes monitoring operations to ensure the standard level of performance (Koumparoulis & Solomos, 2012). The hyperbole presented by coaching centres serves as the breeding ground for the disparity in terms of the facilities they offer to students from different backgrounds. Mehra (2018) points out that the teachers and

administrators at the coaching centres indulge in various forms of discrimination among students in the name of brilliance, mockery or performance-shaming. The coaching centres should abstain from treating some students as superior to others. It leaves a deep impact on the minds of the students who face any kind of discrimination at a young age. The auditing process should ensure that such disparities are reduced and every student is provided with equal opportunities.

2. Coaching centres charge exorbitant fees but the range of fees charged by different centres fluctuates. There is no standard fee structure followed by the coaching centres. Certain guidelines should be laid to fix a range of fees that can be charged by the coaching centres to ensure they do not overcharge the students. Furthermore, scholarship programs provided by the coaching centres should also be closely analyzed to determine that the eligibility criteria are met. The number of scholarships are dependent upon the size, purpose and popularity of the coaching centres.
3. Because coaching centres work on the business model, they should also be held responsible for Corporate Social Responsibility. It can be practiced if these coaching centres are guided by a corporate governance framework.

McRitchie (2015) describes corporate governance:

It is a process set up for the firms based on certain systems and principles by which a company is governed. The guidelines provided ensure that the company is directed and controlled in a way so as to achieve the goals and objectives to add value to the company and also benefit the stakeholders in the long term. (para. 1)

According to Aurobindo Saxena, the Vice-President, Technopak, “Coaching centres need to improve their corporate governance standards” (Deka, 2019, See Figure 3). This can be done through activities like funding or subsidizing coaching fees for students coming from economically backward families or running awareness campaigns for supporting girls’ education in engineering. The coaching centres should realize that they have a social responsibility while dealing with students, who are a vulnerable population and at the same time the future of the nation. Becoming aware and contributing towards that corporate governance will allow coaching centres to expand their vision beyond profit-making.

Impact on Students’ Lives

Students are the focal point of consideration at the coaching centres. They are the reason behind survival of the coaching centres. Certain issues like anxiety, peer pressure, parents’ expectations, and mockery by faculty members have been highlighted in other research studies and media reports and, through this research, I demonstrate how these coaching centres impact the lives of students. Below are some of the recommendations to deal with issues relating to the students’ physical and mental health:

1. Accessibility and gender equity have been major issues for coaching centres and IITs. Here, I focus primarily on the accessibility issues faced by women to seek admissions to the IITs and the gender imbalance that continues to emerge from the past statistics. The *2017 Joint Implementation Committee Report* stated that 7,259 candidates qualified for JEE-Advanced out of 33,307 female candidates who registered for the exam in that year (IITM, 2017). The report also claims that a total of 171,814 students registered for the exam in 2017. The JEE-Advanced

Information Brochure 2020 highlights that the IIT Council offered supernumerary seats in the undergraduate programs at IITs to female candidates without any reduction in the total number of seats to improve the gender balance by 20% in the year 2020-21. Sharma (2020) notes that IITs will be reserving a fifth of their seats by increasing the percentage of reserved seats from 17% to 20%. A similar policy could be adopted by coaching centres to create more seats for aspiring female engineers in technical education. An attempt should be made to create a safe and welcoming environment for girls by creating more opportunities to take up engineering among a male-dominated profession. The coaching centres often ignore these gender-related disparities but it should be their moral responsibility to spread awareness about it and inspire more females to prepare for engineering. Furthermore, it is also important to analyze the concerns regarding safety of women at the coaching centres, particularly in hostels in future research as that area also lies unexamined.

2. Mental health and wellness of students at the coaching centres have caught attention the attention of the media in recent years. *Assignment Asia-Kota: A Town of Lost Dreams?*, a documentary by China Global Television Network (CGTN), highlights how society has been inclined towards a few professions like engineering and medicine more than others (Bawa, 2017). In the documentary, Ravi Kumar, the District Magistrate of Kota states, “It is mainly expectations of the parents and the way the society has glorified few professions at the cost of actually ridiculing or belittling other equally good or much better professions has created the situation.” In this process, students who do not have the aptitude for

JEE-Advanced feel trapped in a system which has no exit. Moreover, students who wish to pursue the less acknowledged professions (like photography, singing or writing) face many problems in navigating their career paths. All these factors create excessive pressure on the students primarily based on the high expectations imposed by their parents and the peer pressure they face at the coaching centres in Kota. It leads a life filled with anxiety, depression, and low self-esteem.

3. Dr. M L Agarwal, running the Agarwal Neuro Psychiatry Center in Kota for over 30 years, has been dealing with mental issues of thousands of students at the coaching centres. Bawa (2017) discloses that students at the coaching centres in Kota are 25% more likely to have depression than those who do not attend such centers. There is a need to mandate psychological counselling and guidance for students at the coaching centres. Some coaching centres have started helpline numbers to report any psychological issues or concerns. While some elite coaching institutes have started this service, it is not visible at all centres. Moreover, students are often fraught with stigma for explicitly discussing their mental health. Educators, especially teachers have a huge responsibility to create an atmosphere of care and concern for all students at the coaching centres.
4. Parents need to realize the potential of their children rather than imposing their unaccomplished ambitions upon them. Students should be encouraged to pursue the profession of their choice and interest. A news report by Sheoran (2019) claims that in the initial years of ER91, coaching centres used to conduct such aptitude tests but as commercialization increased, most of the centers stopped conducting the tests. Coaching centres should conduct screening tests to evaluate the capabilities of the students. The screening tests can be performed at various

levels. For instance, aptitude tests to determine the potential of a student, psychological tests to determine their ability to live under pressure away from their family and more. Career counsellors can be appointed to help students navigate their career paths based on the aptitude and interest.

5. The quality of food and the accommodation facilities also need to be audited regularly. As reported in findings by Mishra and Singh (2017), 78% of students were dissatisfied with the quality of food served at the hostels, and 62% students were tense or stressed due to cut-throat competition, family pressure, lack of a circle of friends, and absence of any physical or leisure activities. Physical activities or mindfulness activities must be organized at the coaching centres for students as well as faculty members. The coaching centres along with their faculty members and administration staff should work towards creating a healthy and nurturing environment for students. More flexibility should be provided to students to adjust their study schedules to include other activities.

Implications for Theory, Practice, and Research

Given the key issues highlighted in this research and the recommendations made from the analysis, there are various implications that can be helpful for restricting the impact of excessive commercialization at the coaching centres. There are different implications for theory, practice and research.

Implications for Practice

The implications for practice can be broadly classified into short-term, medium-term, and long-term depending upon the current requirements for addressing the issues emerging at the coaching centres.

The short-term implications can include initiating a self-reporting system at

the coaching centres in a time-bound manner. This could be done annually. Self-reporting will make the coaching centres more accountable for their practices. They will think before they act. The verified reports could also be published on their official websites. This will be a positive step towards maintaining transparency in the system.

The medium-term implications include setting up a regulatory authority or agency that can monitor the functioning of the coaching centres from time to time. It should oversee the marketing activities, fee structure, eligibility criteria, admission procedure, teaching pedagogy, recruitment and selection process of faculty and administration staff and more at the coaching centres.

The long-term implication of coaching centres is to aim at providing holistic development of students rather than preparing them to pass an exam. The coaching centres should provide a balance between academic and non-academic spheres for the students. Parents, teachers and administrators together can work towards cultivating an open-minded approach towards other professions, without excessively glorifying some.

Implications for Research

This paper took the case of JEE-Advanced preparation centres based in Kota for the study. The coaching industry is spread far and wide in India. Many other coaching centres operate in Kota and throughout India that coach students for other exams. For instance, medical aspirants for All India Pre-Medical Test (AIPMT) or National Eligibility cum Entrance Test (NEET), management aspirants for Common Admission Test (CAT) or Graduate Management Admission Test (GMAT), students enrolled in professional courses like Chartered Accountancy (CA), Company Secretary (CS), or

Certified Management Accountant (CMA), civil services aspirants for Civil Services Examination (CSE), and the list goes on. The teachers in higher education have to appear for the National Eligibility Test (NET) or State Eligibility Test (SET) to teach in public colleges and universities.

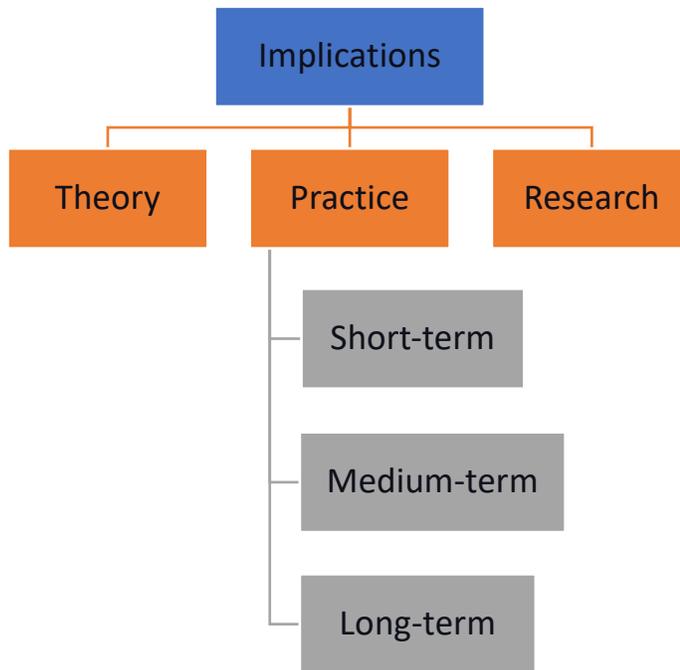
Hence, this research has ample scope for expansion in the future. I would like to expand this study and incorporate qualitative data collection through focus group interviews and surveys to add more credibility and reliability to my findings. The data used in this research and the circumstances of not being able to meet the various stakeholders involved in the coaching industry, their internal organizational structures, especially the structural dimensions (Daft, 2009), could not be disclosed. It will be interesting to spend time with the students, faculty members, and administration staff, and localities in the city of Kota. A comparative analysis of various coaching centres can be undertaken by analyzing their mission, vision, teaching pedagogy, size, and number (branches spread across geographical locations).

Implications for Theory

From a theoretical standpoint, this research does not have much scope at present. The primary aim of this research was to analyze the organizational structure of these centres and recommended changes that can be implemented in practice. This research sheds the first light on the working of these semi-structured organizations that function based on profit-making. Through further research, a theoretical model could be developed for non-formal organizations like these coaching centres. It will provide a new framework for a similar type of organization to function.

Figure 8

Implications for Theory, Practice, and Research



New Education Policy, 2020

Initially drafted in 1986 and modified in 1992, the revised New Education Policy (NEP), 2020 is a positive step towards meeting the 21st century needs of the Indian education system in the era of globalization. While it is a much-welcomed move, the time lag for drafting the new policy speaks volumes about the critical issues that laid hidden under the system for decades. The policy aims at a long-term vision of making India a global knowledge superpower by incorporating an inclusive and holistic approach towards education (Tripathi, 2020). The focus is on building rational beings for society who can tap their fullest potential and contribute towards national development.

It is worth mentioning that some of the critical aspects highlighted in this research and the recommendations provided are reflected in the NEP, 2020. As an educator, it gives me a great sense of satisfaction that my research aligns with the needs and demands of the education system. As a student of administration and leadership in education, I believe it is a positive step towards cultivating a deeper understanding of the education system. By becoming more aware of the system, educators can bring about changes.

The NEP, 2020 revamped the entire education system from early childhood care to higher education. One of the prominent highlight of the policy is the introduction of a new school education system that replaces the 10+2 model with a 5+3+3+4 assessment model (Bakshi, 2020). The 5+3+3+4 assessment model is segregated into 5, that is, pre-school, nursery, prep, class 1 and 2; 3 (classes 3 to 5); the other 3 (classes 6 to 8); and 4 (classes 9-12). The system is focused upon continuous comprehensive evaluation by removing class 10th and 12th central or state board examinations and introducing formative assessments in classes 3, 5, and 8. The medium of instruction until five class

will be in the mother tongue of the student. The new model emphasizes more on technology and languages and helps students through experiential learning and critical thinking. The NEP, 2020 provides a high degree of flexibility for students to choose the subjects according to their interests without any restrictions on the streams.

The NEP (MHRD, 2020) has made some remarkable modifications in the higher education sector, as mentioned below:

1. The regulatory or oversight system for higher education has been revamped to include four distinct functions of regulation, accreditation, funding and academic standard setting. All four functions will operate as independent verticals under separate councils under one umbrella institution, the Higher Education Commission of India (HECI). The regulatory system ensures transparency by conducting regular audits and seeks public disclosure of relevant information. The regulatory system will oversee the functioning of public and private educational institutions in India.
2. Multiple mechanisms are initiated to combat the commercialization of education in India. The fundamental principles laid in the NEP, 2020 emphasize the regular formative assessment for learning rather than summative assessment that encouraged the widespread coaching culture in the country. Both public and private institutions will be required to follow the standard national guidelines. Similarly, the fee structures will be determined with an upper limit to ensure transparency in the system. No arbitrary increases in fees/charges will be allowed during the period of enrolment of any student, irrespective of the public or private institution.

3. Public–private partnerships are encouraged to contribute towards outstanding research at all levels in education. Furthermore, foreign universities will be allowed to set up their institutions in India.
4. A multi-disciplinary approach to ensure unity and integrity of knowledge is adopted for higher education where students will have the choice to choose from a wide range of subjects. The policy also has a provision for multiple exit options for students while completing their undergraduate degree to ease their burden.

The inaugural address on the NEP, 2020 by the Prime Minister of India, Narendra Modi, mentioned that the ultimate goal of the policy is to ensure that the youth is future-ready (Bhasin, 2020). He further stated that the policy is framed on the foundation of 21st century needs, where individuals will not limit themselves to a single profession. They will rather involve in the re-skill and up-skill process for their continuous growth and development. Therefore, the NEP is a progressive step towards building a robust education system for meeting the global needs of the 21st century. It will also provide a direction to coaching centres to re-evaluate their purpose and actively contribute towards synergizing their efforts with public institutions rather than working against them.

Ethics of Care: The Path Forward

I believe education and health are the two pillars that shape and determine the future of our existence. And students are one of the primary sector in focus because they are a vulnerable sector. Drawing inspiration form the work of Noddings (2007), it is important to incorporate themes of care in our education system. She believes that caring is an important way of relating to people. According to Nel Noddings, there are three prerequisites for caring (Smith, 2020):

- When A cares for B, A's consciousness is characterized by his/her attention of the cared-for and motivational displacement that determines his/her behaviour based on the needs of the cared-for.
- A acts in accordance with the previous point.
- B recognizes that A cares for B

The carer must be willing and capable of caring and he/she must be sensitive to the needs of the carer. Else, the purpose of caring will not be achieved. It is vital for A to act upon his thinking. Lastly, both parties should be able to recognize the act of caring that has taken place.

McKenzie and Blenkinsop (2006) describes the four key components of caring proposed by Nel Noddings. These components can act as a roadmap for initiating change at various levels in the coaching industry and our education system at a broader level.

1. Modelling: It involves both showing students how to care and giving them experience in being a responsive cared for. Modelling emphasizes on demonstrating what it means to care. For students, modelling by instructors plays a significant role in the student learning process. When teachers think and act sensibly towards their students, they create an impression on the children that there is somebody to look after them. One of the issues that have emerged from the research is that students often feel lonely and home-sick at the coaching centres. Since, they spent most of their time with teachers, it is important that teachers indulge in little acts of care in the classroom to make the students feel comfortable. Similarly, the administrators could provide more flexibility in the coaching schedules and encourage them to lead a healthy and stress-free lifestyle.

2. Dialogue: It transcends beyond simple talking and creates room for free-flowing communication to take place. For instance, informal communication between the instructor and the students. When conversations flow naturally and without any hesitation, students feel empowered in the classroom. They can discuss their problems and concerns with ease without the fear of judgement. Teachers and administrators should try not to impose their thoughts and ideas upon the students. Students should be allowed to present their views on every topic, both academic and non-academic.
3. Practice: Everything looks good on paper as long as it is implemented. Instructors should create opportunities for group discussions and projects to occur in the classroom. By engaging students into group assignments, a strong sense of belongingness develops among the peers as well as with the instructors. By actively involving students, we can make them more appreciative of the wider community.
4. Confirmation: It is the act of encouraging and appreciating others. Recognition plays a significant role in the growth process of humans. When we acknowledge people for who they are, we can bring out the best in them. Educators should not base their philosophies upon certain preconceived notions. Educators should encourage the students to choose their career path based on their interest and aptitude. All professions should be treated equally. Whether the student is academically strong or weak, teachers should support them through their journey. Providing feedback is an essential part of the interactions that occur in the education system. It keeps the students motivated throughout the learning process.

Noddings (2007) states, “When we ask whose job it is to teach children how to care, an appropriate response is, ‘Everyone’s’” (p. 4). So, we all play an essential role in establishing ethics of care into our education system.

The New Education Policy, 2020 also emphasizes the importance of care in education:

A good education institution is one in which every student feels welcomed and cared for, where a safe and stimulating learning environment exists, where a wide range of learning experiences are offered, and where good physical infrastructure and appropriate resources conducive to learning are available to all students.

Attaining these qualities must be the goal of every educational institution.

However, at the same time, there must also be seamless integration and coordination across institutions and across all stages of education. (MHRD, 2020, p. 5)

Therefore, it is essential to include the themes of care into our education system and focus on delivering more sensible and realistic solutions for the educational problems, ones that go beyond academic achievement and commercialization.

Limitations and Future Directions

The study has adopted a thorough document analysis of various public documents. The functioning of the coaching centres has come into the limelight in recent years which is evident from the scarcity of literature on the topic. This also provides an excellent opportunity for conducting further research on the given topic. Document analysis suffers from the limitation of biasedness in the documents being analyzed.

Proper consideration has been given to incorporate a personal account of students at the coaching centres through various documentaries, blogs, and journal articles. However, in future research, I intend to undertake qualitative research by conducting focus-group interviews and surveys. It will add more credibility to the findings and act as a great value-addition to the existing literature on the private institutions functioning in India. The research study also has considerable scope in exploring the private institutions functioning on the commercialization aspect in Canada. International students will be the focal point of consideration in that research.

Personal Reflection

When I enrolled in the Master of Education program at Brock University, I was determined to undertake the research pathway. However, I was not certain about my research topic. My past academic experience followed by teaching experience in a higher educational institution provided me with deep insight into the Indian education system and the issues that needed to be addressed. As an educator, I found the area of commercialization of education as one of my core areas of interest. The topic resonated with me on many levels. Throughout my program, I continued to connect different courses through this lens to decide on my final topic. The knowledge I gained through the MEd program gave me the confidence to proceed with my research.

I knew it would be challenging as I was researching at the university level for the first time. But this research paper has put my skills and patience to test beyond measure. I am a firm believer that nothing comes easy. For an incredible thing to happen, you have to let yourself go through the process no matter how challenging it may be. Some personal issues also had a huge impact on my progress, both academically and non-

academically. Although I almost gave up at a certain point, I am glad that I did not. This has been a year of many firsts that has forced me to lose a part of myself. It was difficult but it also led me to rediscover myself.

Every new experience comes with a certain level of difficulty. For me, the biggest challenge was to remain focused amid Covid-19. It was extremely difficult to stay indoors and maintain the same level of focus and determination to work on the paper. Having discussions with my supervisor, friends and my brother helped me to navigate through this research pathway. I have grown as a researcher through this paper. This Major Research Paper has laid the foundation for me to pursue doctoral studies in the future. I look forward to more valuable experiences, both as a researcher and an educator.

Conclusion

The New Education Policy, 2020 rightly states, “education is fundamental for achieving full human potential, developing an equitable and just society, and promoting national development” (MHRD, 2020, p. 3). The purpose of education is to build rational beings who are open to new experiences. The coaching industry has a deep-rooted presence in the Indian education system that is difficult to eradicate. However, by addressing the loopholes in the system, coaching centres can continue to operate in harmony with the mainstream education system. It will take time, effort, and patience to deal with the critical issues one by one to make the system more holistic and transparent. Parents have a responsibility to give their children the liberty to decide their area of interest and future aspirations. Teachers need to be role models for helping students explore their hidden potential. Last but not the least, students have to take full charge of the situation and decide what they want to pursue in their lives.

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Appendix

Exemption Letter by Social Science Research Ethics Board, Brock University



Brock University
Office of Research Ethics
Tel: 905-688-5550 ext. 3035
Email: reb@brocku.ca

Social Science Research Ethics Board

DATE: February 25, 2020

FROM: Lori Walker, Manager Research Ethics
Lynn Dempsey and Robert Steinbauer, Co-Chairs REB (Social Science)

PRINCIPAL INVESTIGATOR: KUMAR, Rahul - Educational Studies

STUDENT INVESTIGATOR: Gurbinder Kaur (gk17mp@brocku.ca)

FILE: 19-263 - KUMAR

TITLE: The private coaching centres in India: A document analysis of JEE-Advanced preparation centres on the lives of students in Kota

On behalf of the Brock University Social Science Research Ethics Board (SREB), the Research Ethics Office has conducted a review of the above titled proposal and has reached the following decision:

DECISION: Project Exempt

Upon review, it has been determined that this project does not require ethics clearance due to the reason(s) stated below:

The project is exempt as per TCPS2:

Article 2.2

Research does not require REB review when it relies exclusively on information that is:

- a. publicly available through a mechanism set out by legislation or regulation and that is protected by law; or
- b. in the public domain and the individuals to whom the information refers have no reasonable expectation of privacy. For example, identifiable information may be disseminated in the public domain through print or electronic publications; film, audio or digital recordings; press accounts; official publications of private or public institutions; artistic installations, exhibitions or literary events freely open to the public; or publications accessible in public libraries.

While not strictly necessary, you may want to indicate on relevant documents that the study has been reviewed by the Brock University Research Ethics Board (REB file# 19-263) and found to be exempt from REB oversight.

Thank you for submitting your application to the Brock University Social Science Research Ethics Board.

Lori Walker, MEd, OCT
Manager, Research Ethics
Brock University | Office of Research Ethics
Niagara Region | 1812 Sir Isaac Brock Way | St. Catharines, Ontario L2S 3A1
brocku.ca | T 905 688 5550 x 4876