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Investigating the Effectiveness of Community-Based Learning Programs in Promoting Social Inclusion and Equity in Punjab

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Abstract

*The presented study finds out how well community-based learning initiatives in Punjab can promote social inclusion & equity. This report acknowledges the ongoing difficulties that underprivileged groups in Punjab confront due to the factors of social exclusion or injustice. Programs for community-based learning have become recognised as promising instruments for resolving these problems by promoting inclusive behaviours and empowering people. By analysing their outcomes including highlighting the essential aspects that led to their effectiveness, this study aims to investigate how these initiatives helped to address the problems of social inclusion and equity. The research used a quantitative method approach for gathering and analysing data. To gauge their perceptions of changing social inclusion as well as equity, individuals involved in community-based learning in the province of Punjab were surveyed as part of the quantitative part.*

**Keywords:** Effectiveness, Community-Based Learning Programs, Promoting Social Inclusion, Equity in Punjab.

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Cite Us



## Title

**Investigating the Effectiveness of Community-Based Learning Programs in Promoting Social Inclusion and Equity in Punjab**

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## Abstract

*The presented study finds out how well community-based learning initiatives in Punjab can promote social inclusion & equity. This report acknowledges the ongoing difficulties that underprivileged groups in Punjab confront due to the factors of social exclusion or injustice. Programs for community-based learning have become recognised as promising instruments for resolving these problems by promoting inclusive behaviours and empowering people. By analysing their outcomes including highlighting the essential aspects that led to their effectiveness, this study aims to investigate how these initiatives helped to address the problems of social inclusion and equity. The research used a quantitative method approach for gathering and analysing data. To gauge their perceptions of changing social inclusion as well as equity, individuals involved in community-based learning in the province of Punjab were surveyed as part of the quantitative part.*

### Keywords:

[Effectiveness.](#)  
[Community-Based Learning Programs.](#)  
[Promoting Social Inclusion, Equity in Punjab](#)

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## Introduction

Inequality along with social exclusion are major problems that Punjab's underprivileged groups must contend with. These difficulties arise due to multiple problems, such as economic inequality, and cultural prejudices, including restricted access to resources (Edwards, [2019](#)). Forging an equitable inclusive

society that embraces heterogeneity and guarantees equal chances for everyone requires eliminating the factors of social exclusion while improving the justice system in the society (Ahmad & Hamid, [2021](#)).

The issues of social exclusion or injustice are persistent for Punjab's underprivileged people. Various nationalities, faiths, castes, as well as economic



origins, make up the state's population, which creates complicated social forces that can reinforce inequality as well as exclusion (Kaiser et al., 2019). Punjab continues to struggle with inequalities in educational setups, healthcare facilities, as well as access to basic amenities, which unfairly targets vulnerable groups, despite the tremendous growth of the economy in the Punjab province in recent years.

The issue of social exclusion has several facets and includes the marginalisation of people or groups from full involvement in social, financial, or political systems. Inequality, stigmas, and restricted opportunities in life can all take the form of exclusion (Mmako et al., 2019). Social exclusion has wide-ranging repercussions that negatively impact human health, social cohesiveness, as well as sustainable growth.

In Punjab, wherein societal inequities continue to exist despite multiple efforts to overcome them, therefore equity is a critical issue that needs to be addressed. Encouraging justice and balance while making sure that everyone has equal access to basic resources is a key component of addressing these challenges (Sato et al., 2020). Equity recognises that some people might need some extra assistance to overcome current obstacles and reach parity as opposed to equality, which treats everybody in an equal manner.

Community-based learning initiatives have emerged as viable solutions to address these issues, aiming to enhance the sentiment of social inclusion as well as equity in the province. In order to meet local concerns and support people, these initiatives place a strong emphasis on partnerships between people from different localities, academic facilities, especially nongovernmental organizations (Sato et al., 2020). These efforts seek to create a feeling of participation or responsibility amongst people while encouraging long-lasting transformation at the grass-roots level by utilising community awareness, and assets, including advanced skills.

Initiatives for community-based learning cover a wide range of events, from seminars on capacity building to conferences on adult learning as well as vocational courses. These initiatives frequently focus

on marginalised communities including rural inhabitants, women, as well as other oppressed minorities (Suarez-Balcazar et al., 2020). These projects aim to improve individuals' social inclusion and give them the tools they need to be transformational leaders in their communities to support opportunities for education, potential for developing skills, and social engagement avenues.

Regardless of the fact that community-based learning initiatives are becoming more and more popular, empirical research is needed to determine how well they actually promote the sense of social inclusion and equity in the province of Punjab. Regardless of the fact that many studies have examined the effects of community-based initiatives on a worldwide scale, however, insufficient study has been done explicitly in the context of Punjab. Furthermore, a thorough grasp of the ways in which these initiatives accomplish their goals and the elements that produce positive outcomes is lacking in the literature (Ahmad, Bibi, & Imran, 2023).

Although there exists significant research on community-based initiatives on a global scale, however, there is very little that particularly examines how well community-based learning initiatives in Punjab promote social inclusion as well as equity. Research already conducted has generally concentrated on the effects of community-based initiatives in other areas or on various facets of social growth. The efficacy of community-based educational programs in Punjab must therefore be particularly examined, and their possible advantages to social inclusion as well as equity must be explored.

By evaluating the efficacy of community-based learning initiatives in fostering social inclusion or equity in Punjab, this study intends to fill a gap in the literature. The research intends to offer important ideas for policymakers, program managers, and especially civic organizations aiming to create truly equitable and inclusive communities by analysing the outcomes along with variables influencing the performance of these community-based learning activities (Khan, et al., 2021).

## Objectives

The following are the objectives of this study:

1. Analyse how individuals in community-based learning initiatives in Punjab evaluate changing social inclusion as well as equity.
2. To pinpoint the essential elements that make community-based learning initiatives successful at fostering equity or social inclusion in the society of Punjab.
3. To investigate how community-based learning initiatives affect social inclusion or equity from the perspectives and viewpoints of important stakeholders in these initiatives.

## Significance of Study

All involved stakeholders along with regulators as well as community organisations working to promote social inclusion as well as equity in Punjab will all be significantly impacted by this research's outcomes. The study gives suggestions for maximising the benefits of community-based educational programs as well as scientific perspectives on the efficacy of these initiatives. The study helps advance future research in this field and adds to the body of knowledge already available on community-based solutions, particularly in the case of Punjab.

## Literature Review

In terms of addressing the needs of the community as well as advancing social inclusion, community-based learning programmes place a strong emphasis on cooperation between local groups, academic facilities, and especially civil society organisations (Oad & Niazi, 2021). These projects cover a wide range of initiatives meant to improve learning, skill advancement, or civic engagement at the grassroots level. This literature review highlights several elements of community-based learning programs, which are discussed as below.

## Community-Based Learning Programs

Members of the public actively participate in the planning and implementation of educational initiatives that address their unique needs as part of

community-based learning programmes (Lambert, 2020). These initiatives support participants' sense of responsibility, autonomy, and involvement while fostering long-lasting transformation at the grassroots level (Bukhari, Khan & Haq, 2024).

Community-based learning initiatives are established on a number of academic paradigms or theories, including participatory action research, the empowerment theory, as well as the social capital theory. These approaches place a strong emphasis on the necessity of including all the community members working together, and addressing issues as a group in order to accomplish the goals of social inclusion as well as equity. Similar to this, multiple studies have shown how community-based learning initiatives are effective in a variety of settings. For example, a community-based learning initiative in a remote Indian village enhanced community involvement and boosted literacy rates in the community (Kim et al., 2020). Similar improvements in educational achievements and decreased dropout rates were seen after a program was launched in the United States (Ahmad, Ali, & Sewani, 2021).

## Social Inclusion

A key idea in fostering just communities is social inclusion, which ensures that everyone may participate in social, financial, as well as political systems. The activity of granting equal chances and removing barriers that inhibit people from fully participation in society is referred to as social inclusion. It entails tackling stigma, and restrictive behaviours, especially prejudice based on traits like gender, race, financial status, or disabilities (Trott, 2019).

The notion of social inclusion is influenced by a number of conceptual approaches, such as the model of disability, Nancy Fraser's philosophy of justice, including Amartya Sen's capabilities approach. These concepts emphasise the significance of eliminating fundamental disparities and fostering equal chances for everyone. Numerous issues, including unemployment, prejudice, restricted access to medical care or educational facilities, including restricted

involvement in policy-making procedures, all have an impact on social exclusion. Due to these circumstances, marginalised people and communities are unable to completely participate in society (Ahmad, et al., [2023](#)).

### Equity

Equity is the efficient allocation of assets, opportunities, and rewards while taking into consideration the unique requirements and situations of people as well as communities. To provide equitable opportunities in life, equity entails identifying and resolving preexisting inequalities as well as giving additional support (Claramita et al., [2019](#)). It recognises that different people or groups could need various degrees of assistance in order to obtain the same results. The literature uses a variety of theories as well as frameworks to explain equity, including the human rights-based approach, Martha Nussbaum's capabilities approach, and John Rawls' theory of justice (Phulpoto, Oad, & Imran, [2024](#)). These approaches place a strong emphasis on correcting systematic disparities and being fair and unbiased.

Equity and social inclusion are two ideas that go hand in hand. Disparities that support exclusion must be addressed in order to achieve social inclusion, and equity lays the groundwork for inclusive societies. Equal opportunity and regard for each person's dignity are the goals of both ideas (Held et al., [2019](#)).

### The Role of Community-Based Learning Programs in Promoting Social Inclusion and Equity

According to studies, community-based learning initiatives can promote social inclusion as well as equity benefits. Programs emphasising adult literacy or vocational education, for instance, have been demonstrated to improve financial inclusion as well as unemployment among marginalised populations (Patel et al., [2022](#)). Similar initiatives that encourage cross-cultural or intergroup communication can help to strengthen the community and lessen prejudice.

Community-based learning initiatives promote fairness as well as inclusion by employing multiple activities. The availability of equal opportunities for

education, professional development, accessibility to resources, the engagement of those who are marginalised, and the expansion of interpersonal networks of support are a few of these. Community involvement as well as participatory methods are crucial components in guaranteeing the viability and efficacy of these projects (Edwards, [2019](#)).

The literature identifies a number of variables that affect how well community-based learning initiatives foster social inclusion as well as equity. These variables have included the degree of civic engagement and responsibility, the degree of program execution, the accessibility of resources and infrastructure for support, and the acknowledgement of the varied needs of participants (Khosro, Oad, & Ahmad, [2023](#)).

The literature review offers a thorough grasp of community-based learning initiatives, social inclusion, equity, and also the connections between these factors. The research emphasises how community-based learning initiatives can advance social inclusion as well as equity while highlighting the significance of components including community engagement, program quality, resource accessibility, and autonomy.

### Research Methodology

A quantitative research strategy, which incorporates quantitative data collection and analysis techniques, is used in the study. The quantitative research methodology includes surveys with program participants as well as the teachers and students from various schools in Punjab. People who have taken part in community-based learning initiatives in Punjab make up the population of this study. In order to choose participants who have finished or are presently enrolled in such programs, a purposive sample technique is utilised. In order to ensure that data saturation is attained, 150 teachers and 150 student participants were included in a quantitative survey to produce statistically significant results, the sample size is set based on saturation. Purposive sampling, which involves locating and recruiting people who satisfy the inclusion criteria, is used to choose the participants.

A standardised questionnaire was used in the quantitative phase to gauge participants' perceptions of changing social inclusion and equity. The questionnaire has been created using proven instruments from earlier studies as well as existing scales. To evaluate the outcomes of survey responses, descriptive statistical analysis has been performed on the quantitative data.

The data gathered from the educators was analyzed quantitatively using SPSS. After many

readings, the qualitative data was coded using the constant comparative technique of data analysis (Creswell, 2007).

### Results

Using SPSS 22, we were able to determine means and standard deviations, which allowed us to answer the first research question. The following table displays the data.

**Table 1**

*The response rate from participants*

Questions	(Response Positively) Mean	(Response Negatively) SD
Have you participated in any community-based learning program in Punjab?	3.52	1.431
How did you come to know about the community-based learning program?	3.85	1.080
What motivated you to participate in the community-based learning program?	4.93	1.256
How would you rate the quality of the program's implementation?	3.35	1.278
To what extent do you feel included and valued in your community as a result of participating in the community-based learning program?	3.26	1.234
How has your participation in the program influenced your sense of belonging in the community?	4.23	1.244
In your opinion, has the community-based learning program contributed to creating a more inclusive and cohesive community?	3.24	0.244
Do you feel that the community-based learning program has helped in providing equal opportunities for all participants?	3.12	1.232
In your experience, has the program addressed issues of discrimination and inequality within the community?	3.12	1.422
How has the program empowered you to overcome barriers and access resources or opportunities?	4.12	1.432
How has participating in the community-based learning program influenced your personal development?	3.14	1.432



Questions	(Response Positively) Mean	(Response Negatively) SD
In your opinion, what are the strengths of the program?	3.65	1.422
In your opinion, what are the areas that need improvement in the program?	3.57	1.762
Would you recommend the community-based learning program to others?	3.67	1.678
Please share any additional comments or suggestions regarding the community-based learning program	3.87	1.789

The above data chart shows the participation of people in community-based learning. The mean shows the positive response rate of participants about the questions answering Yes. On the other side of the table, SD shows the negative response of participants answering No about the questions.

**Table 2**

*Response from teachers in Punjab schools about community-based learning*

S. No	Statement	Mean	SD
1	I keep eye contact with all the students in my class.	1.69	0.467
2	I call the names of all the students in my class.	1.45	1.157
3	With every single one of my class members, I use proximity.	1.45	1.157
4	I keep all the students equal in terms of learning.	2.62	1.152
5	My body language makes students feel that they all are important.	2.21	0.874
6	I arranged the classroom for the facilitation of discussion with SWDs.	3.52	1.657
7	I make use of various visual aids to accommodate the needs of all students.	2.76	1.467
8	I give equal respect to all the students no matter which family background they belong to.	2.03	1.059
9	I give value to the opinion of each student.	2.43	1.546
10	During the lecture, I used words from Punjab culture.	2.93	1.485
11	I make mixed groups of students for discussion.	2.21	0.874
12	I am aware of the learning needs of students.	3.41	1.545

According to the data in the table, a significant number of university teachers adhere to equitable practices for students from different family backgrounds in Punjab. These practices include: arranging classrooms to facilitate discussions with Students (Mean =3.52), being aware of the needs of Students (Mean =3.41), considering all students equally important (Mean =2.62), valuing individual differences of the students (Mean =2.93), using words from their heritage language (Mean =2.43).

**Table 3**

*Response from students in Punjab schools about community-based learning*

S. No	Statements	Mean	SD
1	Equitable classroom practices show the inclusion of all cultures.	3.52	1.657

S. No	Statements	Mean	SD
2	When the teacher gives value to student opinions it provides self-confidence.	2.76	1.467
3	Participation in class discussions improves communication skills.	2.03	1.059
4	Sharing ideas in class increases innovative skills.	2.93	1.485
5	When the teacher listens to all the students in the class it builds teamwork in students.	2.80	1.529
6	When all the students are considered equal, the exam results are justified.	2.21	0.874
7	No student is given priority over others due to their family background.	2.78	1.390
8	Teachers listen to individual ideas.	2.47	1.318
9	Every student is given an opportunity to ask questions in the class.	1.45	1.157
10	None of the students is prioritized due to gender.	2.58	1.465
11	Teachers provide assistance to the students when they ask for it.	2.62	1.152
12	All students participate in the open discussion in class.	1.69	0.467

According to the data in the table above, creating a classroom community (Mean=3.52), The majority of university teachers in Punjab prioritize equitable classroom practices by actively listening to all students (Mean=3.52), adjusting the physical environment (Mean=3.41), valuing intellectual differences (Mean=3.41), avoiding gender disparity (Mean=3.27), using clarifying techniques (M=2.62), and adapting the difficulty level of the content (2.80).

### Discussion

Multiple stakeholders associated with the Community-based learning effort have the potential to benefit in diverse ways from its implementation. The following people or groups have derived advantages from community-based learning: Students are the main target population for community-based learning initiatives. At first, Community-based learning offers students opportunities to achieve their academic, professional, and personal goals. Barret asserts that it has a positive influence on personal learner development, including spiritual growth, moral development, identity construction, and a sense of personal efficacy (Mayo, 2020). In addition, research done by Vanderbilt University in 2001 showed that Community-based learning has a positive impact on the development of interpersonal skills, the ability to collaborate well with others, and communication and leadership capabilities.

Furthermore, the aforementioned research revealed that both students and instructors perceived service learning to enhance students' academic achievement (Ambrosio, 2019). Moreover, Community-based learning has a positive impact on fostering civic involvement and cultivating a sense of social responsibility. Community-based learning has gained widespread acceptance as a pedagogical method in many educational settings, ranging from primary schools to tertiary institutions. It has been noted that, while community-based learning's importance in the current educational environment is increasing, there is still uncertainty about the specific impact of community-based learning programs on student outcomes and the elements that contribute to their effectiveness. Further investigation is required to substantiate this assertion. Educators and scholars - Community-based learning reduces the workload for instructors in comparison to conventional classroom

education since the lessons take place in a non-traditional classroom environment (Jepson and Clarke, 2019). Although teachers may not always be physically present to directly guide students' learning, a considerable amount of time is still necessary for tasks such as reviewing students' journals, facilitating reflection sessions, designing assignments, and engaging community partners. Studies have shown that university professors exhibit more dedication to incorporating service-learning activities into their syllabi when they establish connections between these activities and their research and service interests. Universities also benefit from launching community-based learning programs (Bertella et.al, 2019). Community-based learning revitalizes departments, enhances learners' involvement in learning, and allows teaching staff to align research interests with service objectives. community-based learning offers a chance to gain knowledge about contemporary society through the mentorship environment established among staff, learners, school, administration, and society at large. This facilitates the transfer of information and skills and their application in real-world settings. The whole community benefits from experience learning, resulting in societal advantages (Wiltshier, 2019). Community benefits include increasing students' awareness of the social and economic requirements of their communities and fostering their interest in potential future career opportunities within these settings. Students enrolled in nursing research programs often collaborate with community organizations to combine resources and generate funding proposals. The challenges associated with community-based learning Although community-based learning has made significant contributions to enhancing learning outcomes, it has also faced criticism and encountered challenges in both its theoretical framework and practical implementation. From a philosophical standpoint, the majority of educators still adhere to the outdated notion of education, which involves imparting the teacher's knowledge and competence to pupils (Ehrlich, 2020). Under such an ideal, student engagement regarding the content, manner, schedule, or place of study is unnecessary. The lecturer provides guidance throughout lessons, and students' retention

of content is evaluated via assessments (Shah, 2020). According to the new paradigm, teachers are expected to assume greater responsibility as coaches and mentors, a notion that may be met with resistance by certain individuals. It was shown that the implementation of community-based learning resulted in an increased workload for teachers, without any corresponding increase in compensation from their schools. Moreover, the study of empirical research in this article demonstrates the advantages of community-based learning. However, there is a dearth of confidence in implementing this innovative methodology across the whole education system.

### **Conclusion and Recommendations**

This research has investigated the effectiveness of a community-based learning approach in Punjab in addressing the issue of producing unsatisfactory graduates and improving the quality of education. Employers fail to meet the demands of both themselves and the wider population. According to the scholars consulted for this research, community-based learning is widely regarded as the future trend. However, there is a significant disparity in the adoption rates of this approach between affluent and impoverished nations. Evidence indicates that this technique is widely supported in the schools and colleges in Punjab. Based on the examined publications, community-based learning has garnered a positive reception from Western medical schools. Nevertheless, there has been a dearth of research about the acceptability and effectiveness of its implementation and utilization in Punjab schools. Given the growing risks associated with climate change, technological progress, and global pandemics, nations must adopt experiential learning in order to attain their educational goals. Punjab has expressed its commitment to promoting social justice and accountability as one of its declared objectives in the National Goals of Education No. 5. The realization of this purpose in the educational system can only be achieved by fostering a culture of community-based learning. However, the concept is included in the recently implemented Punjab curriculum, but it will only be introduced at a later stage, namely in high school and college, and limited

to selected subjects such as engineering, professional technology studies, life skills education, and the pure and applied sciences. In order to fulfil the goals of Vision 2030, Punjab's Ministry of Education, in collaboration with colleges and institutions, must develop an experiential learning model that ensures the benefits of this approach are effectively realized. Properly used, experiential learning has the potential to address a pressing want within the local community. Implementing and using this approach enables students to concentrate on practical scenarios,

hence establishing a connection between academic learning and real-world applicability (KICD, 2017). Simultaneously, it enhances their intellectual aptitude, interpersonal ability, self-assurance, sense of civic responsibility, and moral deliberation. Attaining the objectives delineated in the Punjab Vision 2030, such as narrowing the disparity between education and employment, cultivating an enterprising mindset, and enhancing connections with the business sector, may be accomplished.

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