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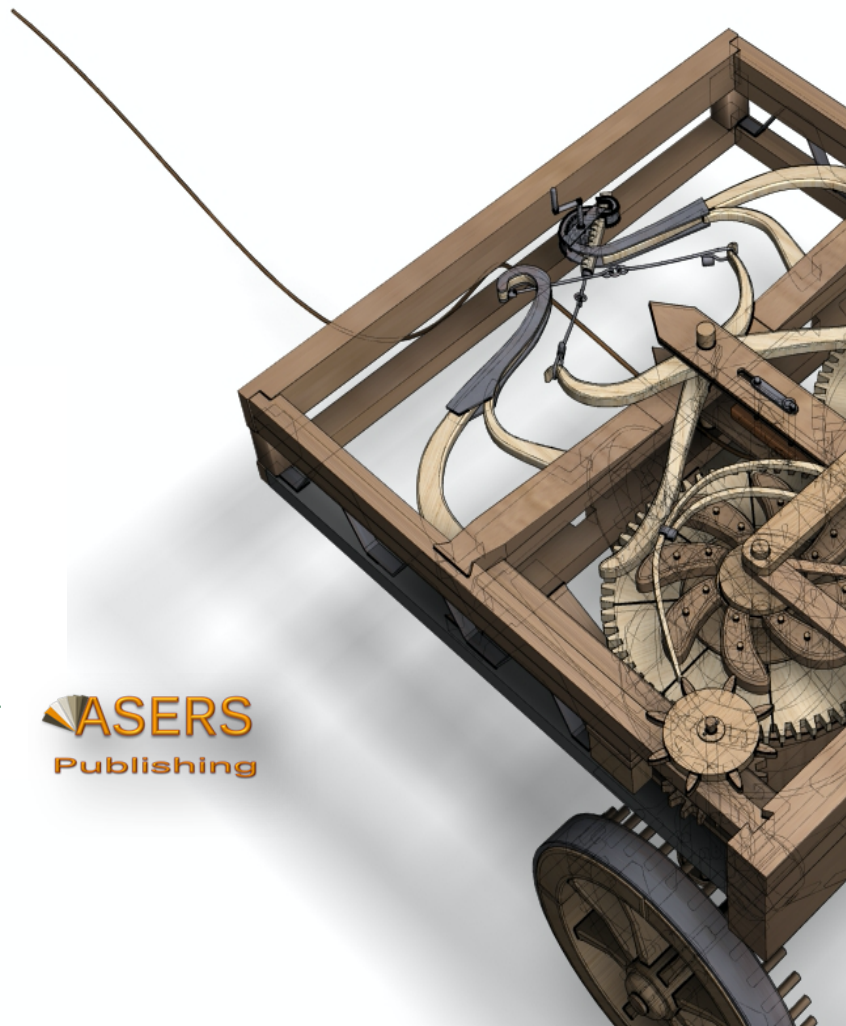
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Integral Education with Societal Extension: Factoring Social Environment to Empower Future Generations with Holistic Human Development and Social Leadership

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Abstract:

This paper explores ways to integrate social responsibility approach to human development and analyses the feasibility of imparting social-leadership among the youth through incorporating social environment and integral teaching-learning pedagogy. The research method adopted is narrative-analytical exposition. The paper finds that co-operative rights-based approach and social responsibility approach in education can collectively create an appropriate ecosystem that can fulfill suitable developmental needs of the society and help in sustenance of development attainments.

Keywords: integral education; social environment; social leadership; holistic human development; human development index.

JEL Classification: I20; A12; M31; Q59.

Introduction

Current education practices in numerous countries like India are highly inadequate to prepare future generations for the immense challenges they face. Though the intended goal of human development is expansion of opportunities, individual choice and human freedom- parameters like Human Development Index do not incorporate 'societal responsibility approach' and 'social leadership' in a comprehensive holistic human development framework. Thus, comes provisioning Integral Education along-with Societal Extension components beyond standard teaching-learning methods. This will open up the social challenges to the present generation.

This societal understanding will help policy makers to design innovative Social Leadership Programmes for including as integral component of educational curriculum to empower future generations with Holistic Human Development and Social Leadership. The idea is viewing 'social environment' and 'social leadership' as extension of individual freedoms- beyond human rights, leading to human responsibility.

Education is the backbone of human resources development in any country. As natural resources are the fundamental factors of production in an economic system, so are the human resources that are critical for the enhancing productivity and growth in the economy. Development of human knowledge creates a knowledge base systematically over a long period of time, which leads to creation and development of civilization- as evident from

ancient prominent human civilizations like Mesopotamian, Egyptian in the Middle East, and the Harappan Civilization in the Indian subcontinent. The ancient knowledge base created and developed in these civilizations had played a crucial role in advancement of scientific, technological and human sciences throughout the world. With advancement of human knowledge, the need for scientifically storing, processing and imparting the knowledge became crucial for sustained growth of the knowledge and intellectual pool itself. This led to the development of the teaching- learning practices, education methodologies and various learning pedagogies like pictographic depictions in the ancient caves, hieroglyphic tablets in Egypt, stone carvings and edicts in India and so on.

Indian system of education had however, a very robust system of Shruti- that is, receiving learning through memorizing the entire verses and knowledge contents and passing them through the same methods by teaching from the memory base only. By development of modern tools like paper documentation, development of computers and virtual space, there has occurred sea change in teaching-learning practices and methodologies. The focus of these modern education systems is developing man power and human resources so that they can effectively contribute to the economic growth and productive activities in the economy. But any meaningful goal of education is never restricted to creating productive human resources only; it should be holistic, comprehensive, all-encompassing, futuristic and visionary so that it can lead to the development of individuals with empowered capabilities of discrimination between justice and injustice, right and wrong- thus leading to providing the foundation for the holistic prosperity and growth of the world. Nevertheless, current education and learning practices as well as the pedagogy methods in numerous countries like India are found to be highly inadequate to prepare the future generation for the immense challenges, they are likely to face.

1.1. Background Research

Human Development vs. Holistic Human Development

When human beings felt the need of systematically creating and developing human resources for the goal of overall advancement of the nation as a whole, the basic idea was to enhance the productivity of the human labor in the economic system. Adam Smith's idea of enhancing the labor productivity for creating wealth of nations was through 'Division of Labour' performing a singular task only over a prolonged period of time- which ultimately leads to manifold increase in efficiency of the worker (Smith 1776). Adam Smith's idea described in his *The Wealth of Nations* was emphasis on skill-enhancing training to the labour in the formal industrial production systems. It was highly limited on the 'human development' dimension of the education and training. In contrast, Indian educational and humanistic philosophers like Swami Vivekananda in late 19th century had propounded both the human and humane dimensions of education and training, in following terms, "We want that education by which character is formed, strength of mind is increased, the intellect is expanded and by which one can stand on one's own feet." (Complete Works of Swami Vivekananda 1989: 1386).

Further, Vivekananda had sown the ideas of holistic human development in his idea of 'man-making education'- "The ideal of all education, all training, should be this man-making... The end and aim of all training is to make the man grow." (Complete Works of Swami Vivekananda 1989: 37) The ancient Indian idea of education was thus putting emphasis on the intellect and will of the individual, as summed up in Swami Vivekananda's definition of education- "The training, by which the current and expression of will are brought under control and become fruitful, is called education". (Complete Works of Swami Vivekananda 1989: 1130)

Further Indian educational philosophers like Dr. Sarvapalli Radhakrishnan advocated integration of heart and spirit through education, "Education to be complete, must be human, it must include not only training of intellect but refinement of the heart and discipline of the spirit. No education can be regarded as complete if it neglects heart and spirit" (Schilpp 1952, Arapura 1966). In particular, Dr. Radhakrishnan put great emphasis on "life-centred education" (Aggarwal 2002, Choudhury 2006). Likewise, many educational and psychological philosophers from the western world like John Dewey in the early 20th century advocated for the 'Philosophy of Pragmatism' and introduced the concept of 'Learning by Doing' through broad based educational methodologies in his *Experience and Nature* (Dewey 1925). John Dewey's ideas of learning by doing have opened up the newer concepts of 'Progressive Education', which is beyond the traditional classical concepts of education, which is based on development of uni-dimensional expertise in a field of knowledge.

Progressive Education

Progressive education is a pedagogical idea that was conceptualized in the later part of 19th century. This system of education was developed as an alternative to traditional pedagogy of Euro-American system prevalent at that time, that was based on classical system and traditional methodologies of preparing for higher education.

Moreover, in the Euro-American pedagogy, education was strongly founded on social class structure. The ideas of 'progressive education' could be found in the writings of John Locke and Rousseau, the ideas that were subsequently developed by educational philosophers like Dewey (Dewey 1916). Locke advocated that, "truth and knowledge... arise out of observation and experience rather than manipulation of accepted or given ideas" (John Dewey Project on Progressive Education, 2002). He stressed on providing concrete experiences to the children for effective learning and understanding of the natural principles. Rousseau likewise had strong belief that memorization of facts in no way can qualify as effective education (as observed in *Emile, or On Education* in John Dewey Project on Progressive Education, 2002).

Progressive Education envisages two indispensable elements: First, 'Recognition of Diversity of Individual', *i.e.*, one's recognition for own's abilities, interests, needs, and cultural individuality. Second, 'Development of Critical, Collaborative Intelligence' promoting abstract reasoning and social interactive intelligence, for collaborative engagement with community issues. These components of education are known as 'Child-Centred' and 'Social Reconstructionist' methods, which have led to the development of foundations of progressive education- which though was lesser known earlier, but today has widespread acceptance, advocacy and adoption globally (John Dewey Project on Progressive Education).

Progressive Education can include wide range of some common features revolved around above fundamental principles, like:

- Integral learning of conceptual pedagogy with experimental methods;
- Including 'Learning by Doing', *i.e.*, self-experiential learning;
- Stress on critical, abstract and out-of-convention thinking;
- Goal oriented approaches and focus on problem solving methods;
- Focus on inquisitiveness and understanding of problems with long terms approaches;
- Problem solving based on practical projects;
- Unique personalized learning techniques focused on one's interests and needs;
- Team works and collaborative learning in groups;
- Co-operative education through participation in social and community issues;
- Understanding diversity and respect for individuality;
- Infusing social responsibility through social sensitivity;
- Promoting innovation, spirit of entrepreneurship- including social innovation.

Progressive education has been adopted as the advanced way of thinking on teaching learning processes, and thus viewed as most desirable today for the advancement and progress of the society today. It includes social sensibility and sensitivity as its most important components. However, extension of this into integration with development of leadership qualities is yet to be fully recognized. Moreover, development of social leadership as an integral component of formal educational curriculum is yet to be included in many parts of the world, though in different ways it may be scattered in the curriculum.

The formal education is thus, an essential ingredient of human development, which has been conceptualized for creating productive human resources. The UNICEF in its idea on 'Human Capital' captures these essential elements in following terms: "An important element of human capital is the knowledge, skills and abilities that individuals accumulate towards personal well-being and improved work opportunities. The benefits of human capital extend to future generations - economic growth is dependent on it, as are social capital and networks". UNICEF goes on further to capture the problems in the adoption of human development modalities- "Success both at school and in transitioning to employment or entrepreneurial opportunities also requires cognitive, social and emotional abilities, but only limited attention has been spent on these skills" (UNICEF, Human Capital). These ideas are based on foundations that had led to development of Human Development Index (HDI) in the 1990s for making formal quantification in dimensions of human development in numerical terms. The idea of Human Development Index was to incorporate basic parameters of human development goals into a framework in the form of estimable and measurable indicators so that countries can be evaluated and ranked accordingly, and desirable targets can be prepared, for which the task was given to the UN Development Programme (UNDP). Though the intended goal of human development has been extended to incorporate expansion of opportunities, individual choice, and human freedom (Sen 1999), the measurement of Human Development Index explicitly captures economic and social opportunities via the income, health and education indices (UNDP, Human Development Report- HDR, various issues). HDI indicator is thus multi-dimensional in its approach which is refined and developed over the years (UNDP-HDR, various issues). These parameters cater to individual entitlements and rights without incorporation of 'societal responsibility approach' and 'social leadership' in a comprehensive Multi-Dimensional Human Development framework.

These multi-dimensional human development frameworks can incorporate not merely “the intellectual and vocational aspects of human development” but in a vision of ‘Holistic Education’ that “celebrates and makes constructive use of evolving, alternate views of reality and multiple ways of knowing”, that includes “physical, social, moral, aesthetic, creative, and ... spiritual aspects”. Holistic education is thus including “the numinous mystery of life and the universe in addition to the experiential reality”. (GATE: Chicago Statement & Education 2000)

Moreover, UNESCO’s “Education 2030” statement advocates for a holistic vision for education as: “Comprehensive, holistic, ambitious, aspirational and universal, and inspired by an idea of education that transforms the lives of individuals, communities and societies, leaving no one behind” (UNESCO Education 2030, 24). Many contemporary educational philosophers and researchers have emphasized holistic education as: developing a wholesome personality with focus on humanistic and post humanistic perspectives and expansion of consciousness for maximum well-being and growth via living together with nature and universe (Di 2020); education with core principles of balance, inclusion, and connectedness with emphasis on relationship between linear-thinking and intuition, mind and body, different branches of knowledge, individual and community, relationship with earth and own soul (Miller 2000); student-centered and culture-centered education incorporating students’ cultural knowledge, life experiences and belief systems (Pang *et al.* 2021) and so on.

1.2. Social Responsibility Approach to Human Development

The implied suggestion here is then providing Integral Education along with essential Societal Extension or Exposure components beyond the standard conceptual teaching-learning methods. This will open up the social challenges faced by the society to the present generation. This societal understanding will help the human development policy makers of any country to design a suitable Social Leadership Programme that can be imparted as an integral component of education curriculum with a vision to create potential to empowering future generation with Holistic Multi-Dimensional Human Development and Social Leadership. The idea is to view ‘social leadership’ as extension of individual freedom- beyond human rights, leading to human responsibility.

The human development approach assumes incorporation of development attainment goals that are basically to be ensured under a rights-based framework. The supremacy of rights is envisaged because in many countries and societies of the world basic human rights are sometimes not even recognized and allowed for attainment. And thus, many desirable development goals may not be ensured in the processes of economic and social developments (World Development Report, 2018). Even the World Development Indicators do not capture many desirable social development dimensions (World Bank 2022, Sahoo 2008). Hence, the enforcement of these rights under comprehensive national and international understanding and agreements under say for example, UNDP Development Goals, like- Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Moreover, UNICEF incorporates ‘educational innovation’ for promoting equity and improving learning- “Innovation in education is about more than new technology. It’s about solving a real problem in a fresh, simple way to promote equity and improve learning innovation in education means solving a real problem in a new, simple way to promote equitable learning” (UNICEF, Strengthening Education Systems- Innovation).

The MDGs & SDGs and the overall HDIs, despite being wide and multi-dimensional in their goals, exclusively do not include development of leadership potential among the people as an essential component of solving social and community problems. Community participation of people in solving developmental and social problems have been identified as important mode of developmental approach and implementing public policy plans. However, systematic development leadership in the community itself to solve the problems of the community mutually in an agreeable framework is yet to be formalized in development models and educational approaches.

Leadership involves social responsibility. Social leadership incorporates taking up responsibility to solve the social problems and issues and thus try to contribute to attainment of development goals of the community or society. Social leadership also involves “protecting freedom, preserving peace and ensuring prosperity for as many people as possible” (Centre for Social Leadership). Thus, there is a need for social responsibility approach to human development- distinguished and different from rights-based approach.

Imparting Social Leadership among the Youth

Infusing leadership, in particular, social leadership among the youth is crucial in order to develop leadership responsibility in the community. Child and youth being in the formative stage of education, critical intervention is required at this stage. Instead of imposing developmental ideas among the people from the top, community-based approaches like community participation in designing appropriate developmental models, ensuring

developmental rights and directing developmental deliveries to the targeted end must be part of the essential human development methodologies. Moreover, infusing greater responsibility in these development participation models can be a symbiotic way of complementing the co-operative rights-based approach. Thus, ensuring developmental rights through community participation (co-operative rights-based approach) and creating a sense of developmental responsibility within the community (social responsibility approach) - collectively both ways can go hand in hand to create an appropriate developmental ecosystem which can cater to the suitable developmental needs of the society as well as help in sustenance of those development attainments. To start with, critical intervention for this can be imparted at the educational pedagogy for human development for the children and youth.

UNESCO's Futures of Education Initiative (UNESCO 2016) advocates for education that prepares pupils as active and responsible global citizens who can tackle global challenges like poverty, inequality, and conflicts. Moreover, it emphasizes forming education systems which embrace the diversity of the students and their cultures, along with provisioning opportunities for intercultural exchange and dialogue. Social leadership endeavor thus reflects in this initiative.

Integral Teaching-Learning Pedagogy: Social Environment & Societal Extension

One of the earliest ideas of 'Integral Education' can be traced in India to the writings of Indian philosopher Sri Aurobindo and his principal disciple The Mother. They propound the 'Principle of True Teaching' as a set of three principles in their Integral Education approach (Sri Aurobindo and The Mother 1954). The first principle of true education put forwards the idea that, "Nothing can be taught. The teacher is not an instructor or taskmaster, he is a helper and a guide." The second principle of education propounds the idea that, "the mind must be consulted in its own growth. The idea of hammering the child into the shape desired by the parent or teacher is a barbarous and ignorant superstition". Lastly, Aurobindo's third principle of true education was, "to work from the near to the far, from that which is to that which shall be." Here they focus on the role of social environment in shaping up one's individuality, which cannot and should not be alienated from a person in his/her formative years.

Sri Aurobindo's ideas and Eastern philosophies of integral education has been advocated by contemporary researchers like Fernandes-Osterhold (2022, 24) wherein "the self-actualized instructor embedded in a transpersonal worldview within a spiritual epistemology of teaching further develops the efficacy of their role by acknowledging the multicultural fabric of students' lives".

The social environment refers to the cultural, political, and societal forces that influence individuals and communities. It encompasses the relationships, norms, values, and attitudes that people hold and how they interact with one another. Kumar (2022, p.351) in a study on school curriculums found therein two important focuses *i.e.*, 'on human education', and 'integral education'. Human education intends to bring "a sense of oneness with the self, world and environment" and 'integral education' intends to develop "all faculties of the human being-including the soul and spirit" while both make efforts to cultivate "a sense of collective consciousness to build a peaceful world".

In the context of education, the social environment plays a crucial role in shaping students' experiences and outcomes. It can affect their motivation, self-esteem, and overall well-being. The role of 'social environment' was pointed out in early 20th century by 'symbolic interactionism', wherein it was postulated that, interactions with significant others play a major role in shaping up the development of self-concepts (Cooley 1902). Likewise, social environments promoting autonomy can assist students adopt self-regulatory capabilities which enable them in effective management of their own learning (Pekrun and Stephens 2015). Latest study finds that one's feeling of a sense of belonging depends upon the degree to which one is a part of inclusive social environment and sense of belongingness can lead to more happiness (Friesinger *et al.* 2022). And it is evidently known that happiness aids in better learning and effective education. The following are some ways in which the social environment influences education:

- *Family background:* Family background and income can be a determining factor for a student's access to learning opportunities and related resources, like good-quality education and co-curricular activities.
- *Peers:* Peers can impact in shaping students' social interactions, attitudes, opinions and behaviors. A positive peer environment can be helpful in inculcating a sense of belongingness among the pupils thus, it might assist in academic accomplishment, and vice versa.
- *Cultural norms and values:* Cultural norms and value systems ingrained in the childhood can form students' attitudes and beliefs about education and their future aspirations. Educational attainments are greatly valued in some societies, with cultural traditions playing a major role in it, while it may not be so in other societies.

- *Social freedoms*: Social freedoms related to schooling, marriage and occupational decisions can also play a significant role in fostering education and career aspirations. Social freedoms aiding to girls' education and preventing early marriages can greatly influence women education.
- *Community tie-ups*: Community tie-ups work as a great support system for social cohesion and bonding. Positive community tie-ups can act as catalyst in creating a learned society.
- *School environment*: The social environment prevailing in a school, such as positive learning motivations, playful activities, teachers' attitudes and inclusive educational support systems, can highly influence students' happiness, learning attitudes and can greatly aid in academic achievement. The negative school environment, in contrast, can distract and disengage a student from learning activities.

Overall, the social environment plays a critical role in shaping students' experiences and outcomes in education. By understanding and addressing the social factors that impact education, educators and policymakers can create more equitable and supportive learning environments that foster student achievements.

The social environment component being a crucial element of one's education justifies integrating education with social extension- with special focus on social responsibility approach of human development and inculcation of social leadership among the youth. The ways to integrate social responsibility approach to human development and feasibility of imparting social leadership among the youth can be imparted through integral teaching-learning pedagogy. For developing social leadership then, social extension of educational goals can be a desirable way to infuse leadership potential among the youth. Social extension can involve participation of students in social issues on the field, making visits to the community, understanding social problems by taking part in community discussions and interacting with different social groups and so on. This can help them to understand various social problems from first hand experiential approaches. This can be more integrated and focused with a deeper expositional learning approach. Youth and students may be required to spend quality time with the community, understand the problems thereof with considerable interaction and observation and then make efforts to solve the problems by mutual co-operation and team work. Enough opportunity should be given to create leadership among the youth here, by appropriate methods of recognition of leadership potential. Simultaneously, social leadership education should be provided to the youths so that some of them can be developed as potential social leaders who can proactively work with the community to design and solve community problems. This can be a systematic process with a goal to impart generation of social responsibility among the youth- to make them understand that they bear a greater responsibility to solve critical problems faced by the communities.

This should be an extension of the human rights already to be attainable for the youths, beyond developmental rights. The feeling of onus of developing the society as part of youths' responsibility, will be critical in the long run to create a better future of the world, where in different parts of the world will have their own leaders who will be proactively working for betterment of their own communities. Such pedagogies then must incorporate social extension for leadership creation a part of integral teaching-learning methodologies.

The human development framework thus can be more comprehensive and greater multidimensional with inclusion of the social leadership component in it. In this sense it can be termed as 'holistic' in its approaches to create human development.

Conclusion

Infusing greater responsibility in the development participation models can be a symbiotic way of complementing the co-operative rights-based approach. Thus, ensuring developmental rights through community participation (co-operative rights-based approach) and creating a sense of developmental responsibility within the community (social responsibility approach) - collectively both ways can go hand in hand to create an appropriate developmental ecosystem which can cater to the suitable developmental needs of the society as well as help in sustenance of those development attainments. To start with, critical intervention for this can be imparted at the educational pedagogy for human development for the children and youth. The human development framework should be redesigned to make it more comprehensive and greater multidimensional by including social environment and social leadership pedagogy in it. In essence, a 'holistic' approach to create multi-dimensional human development should be desirable for making a better world.

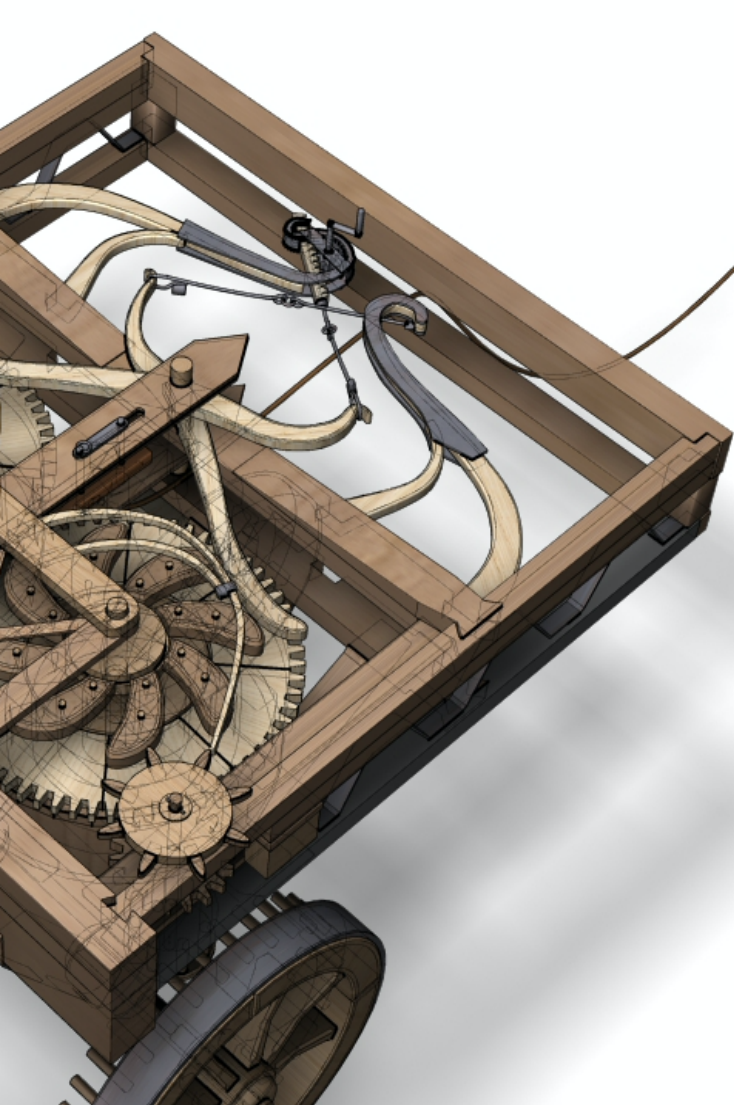
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