Purpose: Prosthodontics requires profound and disciplined training over a considerable period. Given the rigorous nature of the program, it is but logical to assume that the students can encounter some difficulties during the course. The aim of the present study was to gather detailed first-hand information from the postgraduate students of all the practical challenges they encounter in academic program of prosthodontics in India.

Materials and Methods: Utilizing a descriptive, cross-sectional survey, conducted through a web-based self-administered questionnaire, 37 questions were put forward to them. Survey was conducted from 1st November 2019 to 31st March 2020, and a total of 768 responses obtained but 69 responses were rejected as they were submitted after 31st March 2020.

Results: Survey was conducted from 1st November 2019 to 31st March 2020, and a total of 768 responses obtained but 69 responses were rejected as they were submitted after 31st March 2020.

Conclusion: Results showed that even while keeping the basics intact, every course should aim at inputs to help make the academic climate productive, less stressful and student-centric. Change in teaching technology, methodology and structure is needed in training our postgraduate students, to promote a more congenial academic climate.

Keywords: Google forms, Survey, Prosthodontics, Postgraduation
INTRODUCTION:
A trend has been built up for the graduates to pursue master’s degree after their Bachelor of Dental Surgery (MDS) due to increasing patient’s awareness and demands in dental treatment. Master of Dental Surgery (MDS) in India is a three years course which trains in both theoretical and practical areas in a particular specialty.\textsuperscript{1,2,3} Among various disciplines, Prosthodontics is considered as one of the oldest and toughest branches in Dentistry.\textsuperscript{2,3} Given the rigorous nature of the program, it is but logical to assume that the students could encounter some difficulties during the course. The majority of the previously conducted studies examining dental school curriculum have addressed organization, structure, and content issues of the postgraduate program from the perspectives of academicians, course providers, and facilitators.\textsuperscript{4,5,6,7} However, identifying areas of concern from the student’s perspective can provide a roadmap that may help in curriculum revision which is more student-friendly, in tune with contemporary times yet at par with the rest of the world.

The aim of the present study was to gather detailed first-hand information from the postgraduate students of all the practical challenges they encounter in academic program of prosthodontics in India.

MATERIALS AND METHODS:
“Google forms” an excellent tool for collecting the online data, with or without knowing the identity of the participant was used. These forms evaluate and provide the researcher instant statistical results so as to reach an inference. The participants could fill this virtual form in the comfort of their room and even from their smartphones providing them with complete privacy and encouraging them to come up with actual thoughts without being influenced by preconceived notions. The participant was also not under the fear of being tracked down for their answers.

To establish the validation of the questionnaire steps taken were:
1. Face validity was established by discussing the questionnaire with the fellow prosthodontic teaching in various colleges across country, who evaluated questions; effectively capturing the questionnaire.
2. A psychometrician i.e., an expert in questionnaire construction was involved.
3. A pilot study was done.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION:
Thirty-seven questions were put forward to students, and a total of 699 prosthodontic postgraduates responded to the web-based cross-sectional survey.

QUESTIONNAIRE:

1. Gender ---- male/ female
2. Marital status ------ unmarried / married
3. Name of the institute ---- (optional)
4. Type of institute ---- (private / govt)
5. Native state
6. Year of study --- (1\textsuperscript{st} MDS / 2\textsuperscript{nd} MDS/ 3\textsuperscript{rd} MDS )
7. Studying in native state ------ yes/no

2. ND SET
8. Reasons for opting the subject?
9. Before taking up the subject, what did you enquire?
10. What part of the under-graduate prosthodontics did you like?
11. What part of the under-graduate prosthodontics you felt difficult?

3. RD SET
12. Have you faced any problems in adjusting to the new environment of college & hostel?
13. Did your college conduct an orientation program to MDS?
14. Were you given an specialty orientation to the MDS program in the department?
15. Were you given a definite academic calendar with tentative deadlines at the beginning of the course
16. Were you told how to prepare and present seminars & journal clubs?
17. Did you attend / witness seminars and journal clubs presented by your seniors before your presentation?
18. Were you given the list of instruments, books / journals to purchase / refer to during your post-graduate program?
19. Were you given a short brief on research methodology, especially on searching databases for literature?
20. Have you felt difficulty in searching for thesis topic?
21. Does allocation of guides have any role in MDS program?
22. Have you attended the basic science classes as a part of your PG curriculum?
23. Did you feel a high level of stress?
24. What were the possible reasons for the stress?
25. Did you face difficulty in communicating with anybody in the department? (Head of the Department, other faculty members, seniors, juniors, Co-pgs etc.)
26. Did you experience any difficulty in treating patients?
27. Have you given any difficulty in treating patients?
28. Were you given demos for any of the exercises that are to be done in PG curriculum?
29. Have you been given lectures on communication skills?
30. Were you victimized to any signs of partiality?
31. Should you be doing the laboratory steps for all your cases (CD/RPD/FPD etc.) or allotted to a technician after crossing certain limit of number of cases?
32. How many theory lectures have you taken for BDS students?

4TH SET
33. Do you think dental colleges should organize career counselling and check aptitude for choice of subject of post-graduation at the internship level?
34. When do you think a post graduate student should be permitted to take clinical cases?
35. Are you optimistic about future of prosthodontic practice?
36. Keeping in view the present scenario, what will be your choice post PG?
37. Any other issues in the PG course can be suggested?

RESULTS:
Survey was conducted from 1st November 2019 to 31st March 2020, and a total of 768 responses obtained but 69 responses were rejected as they were submitted after 31st March 2020.

QUESTIONS ASKED IN THE SURVEY:
FIRST SET OF QUESTIONS – DEMOGRAPHIC DETAILS:
Among the students who participated in the survey 39.6% were third year students, 36.5% were from seconds year and 23.9% were first year.
SECOND SET OF QUESTIONS:
QUESTION REGARDING CHOICE OF SUBJECT:
For reasons regarding the choice of subject 51.1% students cited interest towards the subject, 24.1% students cited higher returns from this profession. 22.5% students expressed of having “larger than life image “of Prosthodontists among other specialties. Surprisingly, there are 4.2% students joined prosthodontics not as a choice rather because they got in counselling.

REGARDING ENQUIRES ABOUT VARIOUS ASPECTS OF PROSTHODONTIC COURSE BEFORE JOINING:
43.8% checked creditability of college, 41.5% checked about creditability of the faculty, 33.8% checked out on the subject curriculum, and 16% checked out difficulty level of the course and even < 11% students checked out the academic rigor. These data clearly reflect that enquiring about the difficulty level and rigor involved was the last thought in the mind of the student. Whereas it should have been one of the most important aspects the student should have tried to know that whether he or she was prepared to handle and face the hardship of the course.

ENQUIRY INTO WHAT PART OF THE UNDERGRADUATE PROSTHODONTIC COURSE DID THE STUDENTS ENJOY REVEALED THAT:
49.5% students liked complete denture, 36.3% students liked theory in prosthodontics, 31.6% students liked preclinical prosthodontics, 24.6% liked fixed prosthodontics.

ENQUIRY INTO WHAT PART OF THE COURSE THEY FOUND DIFFICULT:
32.2% of students stated that removable partial denture as difficult to handle, followed by jaw relations with 23.3%, tooth preparation 22.2%, case history taking 21.3%, finally 8.3% could not specify reasons.

THIRD SET OF QUESTIONS FOCUSED ON ISSUES ON JOINING THE POST-GRADUATE CURRICULUM:

- When enquired about adjusting to the new environment of college and hostel, 62.3% reported no adjustment problems, but still significant 36.4% of students reported some adjustment issues.
- 70.7% students were given an orientation program at the start of the course.
- 82.9% were given a definite academic calendar with tentative deadlines.
- 69.3% students were lucky to be guided in presenting the seminars and journal clubs.
- 90.4% attended / witnessed seminars and journal clubs presented by their seniors before their presentation.
- 69.8% were given a short brief on research methodology, especially on searching databases for literature.
- A greater number of students 68.8% felt a high level of stress in the course which is quite discouraging.
- When enquired about the communication difficulties, it was surprising to see that the communication gap between students and other faculty in the department was quite higher as compared with head of the department and that with patients 15.2% and senior PG students (14.4%).
- While dealing with patients, the most common difficulties were getting patients to keep appointments (44.5%) showing the importance of regular appointments for patients is lacking in students, communication with transfer patients (21.7%) which is again a neglected part due to lack of interest in transfer of patients.

FOURTH SET OF QUESTIONS AIMS TO RECEIVE INPUTS TO HELP MAKE THE ACADEMIC CLIMATE PRODUCTIVE AND LESS STRESSFUL WITH STUDENT-CENTRIC EDUCATION:

- 88.% students agreed that a strong academic calendar with short- and long-term goals and outcomes would streamline the process of study by the students.
- 81.9% students believed that dental colleges should organize career counselling seminars and check aptitude for choice of subject of postgraduation at the internship level.
- 49.6% students disagreed that postgraduate program curriculum in Indian universities is at par with world class necessitating the requirement for improved teaching and research whereas 27.1% agreed.
- 77% 77% students felt the present duration of 3yrs for the MDS course in Prosthodontics is ideal, 15% believed the duration should be 3.5yrs and 8% to be 2yrs.
- The most effective way for postgraduate level studies turned out to be discussions (70.9%), seminars and journal clubs (44.1%), classroom lectures (24.4%), and weekly or monthly tests (25.8%).
- 37.3% of students felt they should be permitted to take clinical cases after 6months irrespective of the completion of preclinical and typodont exercises.
- 94% of students were optimistic about future of Prosthodontic practice
- 67.1% of students wanted to pursue career in both teaching and practice.

DISCUSSION:
This survey is unique of itself by being postgraduate student centered with high importance to the problems they face in the PG course. Douglass CW et al., 1 in 2002 conducted a study on fixed prosthodontics and concluded the significance of the results is that unmet prosthodontic need will increase and exceed the supply of services for the foreseeable 20-year future. Practicing dentists will find that a sizable minority of the population will continue to need fixed and removable partial denture services.

SUGGESTIONS MADE BY THE POSTGRADUATE STUDENTS:

- A soft copy of esteemed guest speaker presentations, competitive paper, poster and table clinics in conference and convention should be provided to the students so that they can relook the presentation.
- Avoid too many important lectures in different halls at the same time.
- The lectures and sessions should be based on the academic years of PG students so that they can understand the next level of preparation. Exclusive lectures should be arranged for the 1st year postgraduate students to understand the subject better.
- Keeping in view of the economic constraints, of the students, the cost of registration for conferences and conventions should be optimized.

CONCLUSIONS:
The Greek philosopher Heraclitus once said, “Change is the only constant in life.” Permanence is an illusion and that everything lives in the process of constant change. We work hard in our lives, both professional and personal, to get the hang of it– to figure it out. Then comes along a big change, a departure from what was previously seen and understood as normal, and it is hard to accept. May be a change is needed the way we are training our postgraduates, and it indeed has been a long time for a change to happen. Future of the profession is in the best interest of the students, so any educational systems that neglects the student’s perceptions and problems is a failure. Hence it is important to take
measures to improve student’s mental health to be successful in both circular and extra-circular activities. Jain A etal.,7 conducted a survey on 2nd BDS students perceptions on Prosthodontics and concluded that these two reasons as problems 1. Not adequate student faculty ratio 2. Knowledge gained by lecture is not adequate for preclinical prosthodontics

REFERENCES: