

Educational Reforms and Blended Learning

Dr. Richa Kalyani

M.Com, MBA, M.Phil, Ph.D. SET

Assistant Professor (Commerce)

Dada Ramchand Bakhru Sindhu Mahavidyalaya, Panchpaoli, Nagpur, Maharashtra, India

Abstract: *Indian education system has deep ancestries and have seen many transformations. History denote many records, how education in this diversified, multicultural region has changed from informal to formal edification, from Gurukulas, Madarsas to School and University Education. Formal education is still rebellious; ever ready to update and upgrade itself. So the education society always has to keep its learning switch mode on to get transfigured according to the needs of the society. Education infact has no single motive towards the society. It has to fulfil the multiple wants and desires and so as its transformations occur according to the needs of the society. Today, no doubt, education system worldwide has flourished and developed formally with numerous education bodies and societies. Various education policies & recommendations has been shouldering the responsibility to sharpen the edges followed by various legal enactments time to time. Like India, many countries has upgraded its education into formal multi-staged education system. Efforts of NCERT, MHRD, UGC, AICTE, NCTE, NAAC, NIRF, NIEPA etc. should always need to be appreciated. The present paper overviews the role and functions of various contributing apex bodies to bring periodical transformations in the education system. It further endeavor to review the pros and cons of existing system and attempts to evaluate its efficacy in emergent pandemic situations. The paper concludes with recommendations to reform and ameliorate in the light of recommendations of NEP, 2020. It also recommends to adopt blending learning and teaching method for impending era.*

Keywords: Teaching, HEIs, NEP, Reforms, Transformation, Blended Learning

I. INTRODUCTION

India is a country with varied religions, varied languages and varied cultures. Challenge to educate in this diversified society has been bestowed time to time by many apex formal and informal bodies by adopting suitable state-of-the-art education methodologies. Most of the countries in the world have formally accepted the multi-stage education structure with remarkable peak to attain higher education, an achievable one due to the fact that higher education in one's life is a never ending process. India alone counts around 1043 universities, 11779 stand-alone institutions and 42143 colleges providing higher education courses. Higher education through its various technical, non-technical, vocational, specialized courses attempts to fulfil the needs of the various sectors of the society, contributing in National growth and development. The contributions seems to be significant when one observes the total registrations of around 241,369 students in 20 universities and 496 colleges at the time of independence. Ofcourse credit being shared by various apex bodies with substantial involvement of the University Grants Commission during post-independent period.

II. REGULATORY FRAMEWORKS

Regulatory framework should rather be viewed as a systemized approach to provide professional education though no country can surely mark era for its initiation. When we look backs to the period of Vedas & Puranas, the ancient rich historical era provide many unwitnessed instances of regulatory framework been imposed, whether it has been the case of formal establishments of Gurukulas or the well-established raj-darbaras comprising of bodies of ministers for various wings. Such establishments cannot be possible without such framework. Not only Ancient vedic period but also medieval Buddhist period, Islamic period, all observed regulatory periodic impositions. When it comes to Indian ancient education, universities like Nalanda, Taxila, Valabhi, Vikramshila, Odantapuri, Nadia, Mithila, and Jagaddala surely require special mention.

Later on it was the British interference in Indian education systems had done numerous major transformations perhaps with the aim of establishing their own system and to abolish the roots of Indian education ancestries. It was infact a huge loss which can perhaps never be recovered. St. Paul's College of Goa-Protuguese was established by Saint Francis Xavier in 1542. Later the British East India Company had got credit for establishment of first higher education institution in Calcultta in 1781, followed by the Asiatic Society of Bengal, Banaras Sanskrit College and Fort William College in 1784, 1791 and 1800 respectively. The Delhi College was set up in 1792. The Britishers have become quite successful in transferal of medium of exchange to English. Consequently, it may be observed that at present majority of higher institutions do impart education in English medium only.

III. POST –INDEPENDENCE REFORMS

India has record to note 20 universities at the time of independence. The University Education Commission was setup in 1948 under the chairmanship of Dr. S. Radhakrishnan. Formal establishment of the University Grants Commission (UGC) in 1956 as a statutory body has been one of the most significant steps of Indian education system towards promoting and coordinating the university education as well as and framing regulations on minimum standards of education. Post-independence period also marks contribution of NCERT, AIMA, AICTE, COA, ICHR, ICPR, ICMR, RCI, ICSSR. Efforts of MHRD and other statutory bodies with recommendations of education policies has been continually endeavoring to upgrade education standards to meet present demands.

Like India, most of other countries also have enacted its education systems for numerous reasons including social betterment and development. Universalization, standardization, uniformity and quality deliverance has been the most considered factors in this regard.

IV. EDUCATION VIS-À-VIS HIGHER EDUCATION REFORMS

The Constitution of India in its Article 45 had been acted as a directive principle to endeavor for free and compulsory education till the age of 14 years. The Constitution (Eighty-sixth Amendment) Act, 2002 inserted Article 21-A in the Constitution of India to assert that “The State shall provide free and compulsory education to all children of 6 to 14 years in such manner as the State, may by law determine. Article 46, 51A, 330, 332, 335, 338–342 also provides for education. Various educational boards, state, CBSE, ICSE strive hard to shoulder together the responsibilities to provide quality school education upto 10+2 level.

Higher education is the next phase of achievement for Indians to let the country be more strengthened socially and economically. Economic growth of any country may directly be connoted with the output of its higher educational institutional sector which comprise technical & medical education, vocational education, management education, ICT etc. MHRD & other apex bodies has been keeping an eye on various HEIs to deliver quality education and transform it according to emerging needs. Higher education in India is quite challenging task, with key confronts to impart quality education, meet demand-supply gap and scope of research and development for its further advancement. Thrust for research and development has been the most thought-provoking for HEIs where the contribution of IISER, IISc, TIFR, HRI, JNCASR can't be overlooked. For engineering and management stream education, few of the institutions like IITs, IIMs, NITs, BITs have been regarded as quality symbol. HEIs comprise both public and private institutions still striving hard to meet global competition. At such instance, the recommendations of Education Policies has always be taken on a serious note by the Government to reform education sectors including the higher education sector.

V. BLENDED LEARNING - PROMINENCE ON TEACHING METHODS

What matters a lot in education is the teaching methods though which teaching is imparted. It varies with the nature of education, its desired output and other factors. A teaching method comprise basic principles as well as pedagogical strategies used during imparting education. Basic theories connote teaching method can be student centric or teacher centric differentiating the role of teacher from facilitator, delegator to expert. It may be content-focused or interactive method also.

Academic institutions in India has been using the drill and rote learning mainly. The system which Indian institutions has been widely utilizing is the brick-and-mortar system which provide physical school of curriculum and instruction allowing students to get direct education from teachers. Not only Indian schools but also colleges are accustomed to



adopt it as a dominant approach and have not been questioned widely as an alternate method till the outbreak of recent pandemic. It is when the traditional physical teaching has been compellingly substituted temporarily with virtual online methods. Before this experimental phase, the virtual system has never been suggested to adopt at such wide level, rather has been considered as uncomfortable due to varied reasons associated with it. The prime being the cost of equipments, network connectivity, technical-know how to install and use, adverse effect on eyes, misuse of access of networks etc. However, decades have seen stimulations towards use of digital mode of teaching being termed as student centric, flexible system, real world collaboration, multisensory and construct ability.

One cannot regard the traditional methods outdated as it also do comprise use of various well-reliant methods like Lecture method, Seminary Method, Discussion Method, Program Instruction Method, Study Assignment Method, Tutorial Method, Demonstration Method etc. Few of it are need based arisen teaching tools and work effectively under circumstances.

As the education system has been developing, it initiates to utilize various pedagogical instructional methods which comprise direct or differentiated instruction, kinesthetic or expeditionary learning, personalized, game or inquiry based learning or a flipped classroom etc.

As the virtual mode of learning has been initiated gradually, the Government has been stressing to make use of digital technologies in the education. The digital initiative in higher education shall be a remarkable development and aids the country during the period of pandemic. The digital initiative comprise of following achievements/landmarks:

- ☞ SWAYAM ☞ SWAYAM Prabha
- ☞ MOOC ☞ e-ShodhSindhu
- ☞ NAD ☞ e-Yantra
- ☞ NDL India ☞ e-Acharya
- ☞ Vidwan ☞ e-Kalpa
- ☞ FOSSEE

VI. ADHERENCE TOWARDS BLENDED TEACHING AND LEARNING

Recent NEP has been in wide discussion and has been expected to be proven significant for futuristic India. The policy has a separate mention of higher education as well as online education. It recommends pilot studies for online education, digital infrastructure, online teaching platform, digital repository, use of e-learning virtual labs etc. NEP has emphasized use of digitization in education by suggesting blended models of learning. Recent recommendations also stressed to utilize online learning blended with experimental and activity based learning. The blended structure may encompasses face-to-face class, flipped or rotation model, blended MOOC, flexi-mode etc.

In terms of education, blended learning or hybrid learning involve use of technology-mediated instruction alongwith traditional methods providing a mixed-mode instruction. The use of technology-mediated instruction in India has been experimental. It has been effectively used in technical education and in specialized areas. It has been acted as quite cost-effective where the opportunity cost has been considerably high. The recent pandemic has generalized its wide-spread use in college as well as school education, where many of the educators were also found unprepared to make use of technology in education. It has been proven challenging for both learners and teachers. Educational resource material was also found inadequate, with teachers and learners had to manage use of technological tools to move further. At such instant, it is quite obvious for NEP to come forward with recommendations of blended learning methods to keep the country abreast about such exigencies in near future.

The approach need a phase-over patience to utilize online education tools, especially the existing generation should educate themselves and get entrusted to utilize it for their wards. Networking has to bring within hands of users with cost-effective options for provision of electronic equipment like computers and tablets. Practically, the traditional bag comprising of notebooks and textbooks are quite enough to pinch the pocket of majority of buyers in the country. So it is not how the blended learning be utilized is much important than to answer how cost-effective blended learning be provided to the masses. It is recently the Honorable Prime Minister has also advocated development of hybrid system by blending online and offline teaching methods. The technology may also be able to provide flexi methods to adopt with learned habits as a part of open multi-modal learning system.

Higher education has novel ways to achieve where the role of apex bodies and universities need to act in a parental mode. Dreams of 'Digital India' opens hands to welcome the blended methods with gradual approach in the long run, though its systemized implementation has been a major challenge for the education bodies, especially when the technology has to be provided by ensuring prevent from its harmful impacts. The same require to have a collective, collaborated approach to prepare teachers as well as students to make use of best of the approaches.

REFERENCES

- [1]. <https://ruralindiaonline.org/0d51aec0-be99-42f3-a95c-8fd2697f58f3>
- [2]. https://ballotpedia.org/Brick-and-mortar_education
- [3]. <https://teach.com/what/teachers-know/teaching-methods/>
- [4]. <https://senseselec.com/blogs/age-old-teaching-methodology-of-the-indian-education-system-vs-modern-learning/>
- [5]. <https://www.igi-global.com/dictionary/cyber-charter-schools/38120>
- [6]. <https://anilpinto.blogspot.com/2020/10/modern-universities-pre-independence.html>
- [7]. <https://www.education.gov.in/en/acts-higher>
- [8]. <https://www.latestlaws.com/bare-acts/central-acts-rules/education-science-technology-laws>
- [9]. http://ijrar.com/upload_issue/ijrar_issue_1050.pdf
- [10]. <https://ugcnetpaper1.com/important-higher-education-body/>
- [11]. https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Education_in_India
- [12]. <https://www.statista.com/statistics/660862/higher-education-institutions-bytype-india/>
- [13]. <https://www.legalserviceindia.com/legal/article-199-legal-education-system-in-india.html>
- [14]. <https://www.intechopen.com/chapters/73290>
- [15]. <https://www.linkedin.com/pulse/transformation-indian-education-system-national-policy-vasudevan/>
- [16]. <https://www.eklavya.com/blog/indian-education-system/>