

Educational scenario in Indian context: Access & Quality

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Abstract

Educational Scenario in India have a very long tradition since, the vedic period. The technological boom, in the recent years open wide range of possibilities in educational scenario of present and future. Exploring the infinite opportunities of technology for education, empowerment and employment will be the immediate task of educators. Devices and communication facilities of good quality ensure a promising future in this regard.

The peculiarity of Indian context is that, we have bullock carts and satellites one and the same time.

The technological strength our nation is so diverse and rich. The most important constraint in adapting and adopting technology in different realms of education is linked to our vision of education. The philosophy of the nation determines the nature of education, here, amidst of various philosophies prevailing it is so complicated to determine the nature and priorities of education in a country like India.

The educational context in India is highly complicated and structured. Learning is generally perceived as taking place only when teacher and students assembled together with some textual content, teacher always standing in front, whatever is the level/course of study, etc. A situation demands study is only when an examination is announced, is another common trend in learning.

Positive systemic changes are necessary to remodel the pattern of education, nature of courses, curriculum, and procedure of evaluation at all levels. Need changes into a student directed, job specific continuous learning, which require less importance to physical attendance, and more emphasis to in-field experiences. Nature of course delivery, significant assessment procedure transparency in curriculum design and transparency in evaluation, and admission needs extensive improvement by utilizing digital technology.

Keywords: Educational Scenario, Indian Education, Higher Education, Quality of Education, Access to Education

Introduction- Educational Scenario

Education in India has its root penetrated deep into the history of vedic period. The immense knowledge and its transfer through generations in the form of memorisation are still remains as a wonder for the mankind.

Educational scenario in the past was restricted to elite class and purely residential. The present scenario characterised by institutions under various agencies running diversified nature of courses in face to face, correspondence, distance and online courses. Various committees and commissions on different levels of education, provide remarkable suggestions to enhance system of education. National policies on education also provide directives to formulate a national pattern for education.

“NKC believes that providing universal access to quality school education is a cornerstone of development and a minimum necessary condition for any progress towards making India a knowledge society”. What a student acquires after 10 to 12 years of schooling should be thoroughly estimated. Unfortunately, there is no provision to judge the achievements of students in the direction of their future life are missing in the existing system. The system of evaluation is incapable to measure what they gain and what they missed out, in the entire school period. Frequent changes in ideologies hampered the very objectives of education. In the onset of constructivism, the serious misconception occurs in the school education that, children construct whatever knowledge required for them by themselves. The most significant pre condition for such construction of knowledge is support of an adult person, here teacher. So, a teacher with

well-defined set of objectives alone can build up better future for children at school ages.

The post-secondary education, where diversification of courses as certificate, diploma, degree, professional degree, etc., aimed only to procure a job, but miss necessary skills and habits for proficiency in particular area even in professional courses. Further higher education and research also continued just for the sake of acquiring degrees than creating strong knowledge base in specific areas. Revamping of the entire system of education is thus inevitable by rethinking on pattern of education, aims, curriculum and its construction, learning methodologies, measures for assessment and feedback for learners.

Significance of a Vision

The ideology of a nation decides the aim/ aims of education of that nation. Here, democratic aims and discipline still in clogged condition. Discipline, the most important component of democracy is misjudged as obedience only. In democracy, discipline stands for contribution to democracy in building legislations and keep them high by providing others and enjoying the same.

Quality life should be the primary aim of education. Human happiness will be the real outcome of education. And human happiness index should be come in place of GDP to measure the growth and development of a nation. This may be realised only the constitutional provisions are translated into proper actions for equality at least for procuring education.

Education for All in par with UN Millennium development goals, in full swing in Indian educational system also.

National level projects such as SSA, RMSA and RUSA are formulated to achieve the aim of universalisation of education from primary to higher education levels.

Though nation framed a strong step in the form of RTE, the rights of pre-school children and adolescents are not safeguarded in the educational scenario.

Expansion of educational facilities by enhancing number of institutions help to increase educational facilities at different levels, but create issues of social accountability atleast in higher education sector. The power of democracy lies in how it makes use of the legislature, that power is available for common people in the form of RTI. Such legislations are required for providing clear guidelines for institutions running educational programmes at various levels. Otherwise, education will become a marketable commodity.

Economical side of this decision – Students with less academic interest also can study for all types of courses is a serious demerit of the privatisation of professional and higher education. The first direct impact of this is the poor pass percentage even in professional courses. Low quality input is the main reason for the deterioration of quality even in prestigious institutions including IITs and IIMs. The more serious concern, but less evident may be the poor quality professional produced in masses without definite intentions resulted only to increase the number of unemployed youths in the state and country. It is highly embarrassing that majority of students pass out from engineering sector opted for management or banking sector, then what is the use of the professional education they received. Hence, aims of education should be redesigned in terms of general as well as specific pertains to various levels of education. State control is progressively decreases due to proper legislations, this should be properly reinstated.

Factors influencing Education

Philosophy of the nation is the foremost aspect in deciding nature of education in all nations. The traditional idealism, Buddhism, etc, merged with naturalism, democracy and pragmatism in later period, now incorporate Critical pedagogy to this account to result a mixed philosophy for the nation, which naturally reflected in the field of education. The lack of clarity and emergence of controversies related every aspect of education is due this inter operative nature of philosophies.

Political parties in power from time to time is another important factor influence the nature of education, as the philosophy of nation contradicts with the political ideology of the parties on power. It is also unhealthy that many policies lack continuity due to change in ruling parties in states as well as in centre. It is most significant that planning for education is planning for hundred years.

Though new education policy is still in the stage of development, we are far behind by the gap of 1986 policy still termed as “New Education Policy”. It is inevitable that both national policy and a flexible state policy on education should be framed atleast in an interval of 5 – 10 years, due to tremendous changes in techno-pedagogic and socio-economic aspects.

The concept that learning occurs only when a teacher and students assembled in a classroom, where teacher teaches a textbook and students silently listen and taking notes is the context at which learning is most of the time a wrong notion.

Real learning happens in informal settings and Media plays a vital role in such learning, as family withdraw from its duty of life education as, families change its structure to nuclear and then to neutron families. Variety of media esp. the electronic and social media have profound influence on education of the forthcoming generations.

Technological explosion esp. advancement in communication and applications along with mobile phones drastically intervene the scope of educational system.

Education now considered as a commodity, which provide opportunity for many investors including corporate and industries to interfere and invest in. Here, the aim of education is limited to its economical benefit only.

A Job opportunity is another factor which influence nature of education. Higher secondary stage is the stage of diversification, where students mainly concentrated to science stream, with a view to join for engineering and Medical courses. Even students in science do not wish to become a teacher are a matter of great concern.

A promising aspect of globalisation is that it opens wide variety of non-conventional job opportunities. The high rate of competition affects the unemployed youths to work for low wages under stressful situations.

Trends in Education

Cost of Courses

Increase in the cost of the courses, as the proportion of private sector outnumbered the public institutions is the recent trend in education. The concept of free education is not real even at school level, because pupils have to spend a lot of money to establish them equal among their school mates. This social pressure makes pupils from poor and vulnerable family backgrounds to go for different jobs or let themselves dropped out of school and may hinder their further education. Increased economic demand for each course open the scope for educational loans, which has higher rate of interest than a vehicle loan and made the students from poor backgrounds, either to stay away from education, or to became life time debt to institutions provide loans for their education. Government may conserve a fund to provide interest free loan for the eligible students to ensure social equality.

Methodology

Newer methodologies open wide scope for functional learning. Mediated learning through multi modes of delivery of learning materials opens an astonishing trend in education. The simply multimedia presentation in a class provides real life experience, which was not easy even in recent past. Preparation manipulation and execution of such deliverables using proper methodology is a boon in the recent system of education. Scarcity of adequate resource materials and lack of proper training to use such methodologies are the main constraints in adopting such methodologies

A proper learning methodology, i.e., “Learning to learn” methodology will have impact throughout the life of an individual. Missing the same in education is evident in the mushrooming ‘Coaching classes’ for various jobs.

Internationalisation of courses

Pre and primary schools bearing the board international, is a common trend. This reiterated the fact that being international, conveyed the means of quality standards. The

immense opportunities of internet provide facilities for easy internationalisation, if properly explored. The concern for whole planet can be the main feature of internationalisation, which should be incorporated in curriculum at all levels in terms of climate, culture, environment and experience.

Essentiality of Talents

Proficiency in one or more area is inevitable in the world today. The Kousal Vikas Yojana and ASAP are best initiatives in this direction. Along with the conventional course of study students are able to acquire a vocational skill, which empower them for independence soon after completion of their studies or they can learn while earn. Talent is a must esp. in private sector not only for getting a job but also for sustaining and promotion.

Question of Access

Institutional Access

Strengthening existing institutions and opening new institutions are required to enhance access to education. The resources of public sector should be subjected to social audit for its optimum utilisation. There are incidents of vacant seats even in reputed institution of higher education due to many reasons. Suitable policy and guidelines should be framed to eliminate such wastage in the form of vacant seats. Open and Virtual institutions, which do not require a physical existence, functioning on the principle of 'Ubiquitous learning' is the best option for enhancing institutional access to learners in any place of the world.

Access to Courses

Another issue regarding access is that certain courses must have regular or face to face presence of individuals' atleast for specific stages of courses. Incorporating maximum local resources supported by web technology can be an effective alternative to this issue. One of the serious concerns with regard to courses is to locate approved and unapproved courses among the pool of courses run by various organisations. A nodal agency at national level should be set up to provide list of approved courses and list of fraud/illegal courses and institutions through a website, which must be regularly updated.

Issue of Quality

Institutional Quality

Institutional quality is the first determinant in quality concerns. A disable friendly building with necessary amenities and safety precautions is a pre-condition for a quality institution. Size of rooms, common place, and administration area, adequate facilities for aeration, lighting, seating, learning and storage are mandatory requirements. The locality of the institution and its transportation access, campus area, etc, is criteria for a good institution.

Quality of Students

Quality of students means responsibility of students, as more stress is given on the ideology of constructivism; students have many responsibilities in the process of learning, than in conventional system of education.

Teacher Quality

Teacher quality is the most significant determinant in quality of education. Scarcity of quality teachers is the major

constraints in all levels and types of institutions. A major share of teaching positions even in reputed institutions are filled by contract or guest teachers, which adversely affect quality as continuous assessment is required for desirable formative behavioural changes in learners. Another significant issue in teaching, especially higher education is that, a person without any learning of teaching, only on the basis of instinct can teach, except in teacher education courses. A person, however expert, can teach best only by acquiring necessary skills in teaching, which requires mastery of such skills. Hence, a teaching course should be made compulsory for all those who enter in the field of teaching in any and all disciplines including professional institutions. The psycho-pedagogic utilization of learning resources by a trained teacher will definitely enhance the quality of teaching and their by learning.

Course material

The quality of course material is of great concern in ensuring quality of education. The practice of prescribed texts and supporting guide books boosts deterioration of quality in education at various levels. Learners do not search for original and authentic resources as the readymade capsules are cheaply available which help them to qualify the written examination, without learning anything required for the course.

Assessment Practices

The summative assessment in the form of semester end examination in the existing system is incapable to measure the real learner achievements. More transparent procedure should be developed and use for assessment and feedback. Rubric based and portfolio assessment, etc., are common at international level to enhance the quality and transparency in assessment. The existing system of assessment provide very limited scope for feedback to learners, which is of high significance as the accurate feedback at right time is required for improving performance.

Conclusion

The era is of technology, utilise the immense potentialities of ICT in teaching, learning, assessment and in providing feedback. Make the technology serve us than it slave us. Redesign courses, process of curriculum construction, teaching learning methodology, procedure for evaluation, etc., to learner driven system which should mange for them by themselves.

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