

‘Bridging the Gap Between Expectations and Limitations: Teaching, Learning and Evaluation at the Level of Higher education in India’

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Any country has to take care of education, if it has to develop. The government must assume the responsibility for providing and financing education, especially basic education. But higher education also needs to be taken seriously. India has produced some of the most talented and intelligent students and workers, but they may be counted on fingers, if seen in the light of our vast population. Lakhs of colleges and institutions are in India, but there is a question mark related to quality, access, and equality. India's higher education system, churning out millions of graduates every year who are unemployable, speaks of the need to improve the quality of education in the country. Education planners must need to address this issue seriously.

The students' overall development is the primary concern of any educational institution. It is the responsibility of the institute that when a student leaves college, he should be ready to serve in the area of his expertise having a set of moral values and a balanced personality. With this goal, the educational institutes must strive towards their mission of preparing citizens, professionals as well as human beings.

When we have a glance over the present scenario of higher education, we come across a huge mismatch between what is being taught in schools, colleges and universities and the knowledge, skills and behaviour which are looked for by the business organizations for new recruitment. Even students realise that their education lags behind and is irrelevant to the jobs they are hoping to apply for in the future.

For the wholesome growth of students, the three elements teaching, learning and evaluation of their learning level in a continuous process, is an integral part of the education system. The constant vigil over this process is very crucial. There must be a synchronisation between teaching and learning followed by proper evaluation of the progress of the students. Teaching and learning are expected to have efforts to shape raw learners into a polished educated youngster.

The methods of teaching, learning and evaluation have been changing to adapt to the requirements of the contemporary society. For the higher education the traditional method of lecturing, giving notes, supplemented with some learner centric extra curricular activities such as group discussions, seminars, miscellaneous competitions and the evaluation at the term end on the basis of written test based on the prescribed syllabi usually accompanied by oral examination. That may be called more or less a memory test. The students having degree after such type of education do not cater to the requirement of the market. There is a big gap between the two. Now this is the high time to bridge this gap.

National Assessment and Accreditation Council has constantly been trying to bring reformation in the traditional methods to disseminate knowledge to the stakeholders. NAAC has been entrusted with the responsibility of evaluation of the colleges across India with the focus on teaching, learning and evaluation. It encourages healthy practices for faculties and suitable education for students with a holistic approach. In the period of globalisation the parameters for quality education should be set with local interests in mind.

Teaching, learning and evaluation methods are the most important factor when we aim at wholesome development. All the educationists, policy makers talk big as far as higher education is concerned. The international parameters are set in the Indian scenario. But, the fact of the matter is far from reality. The reality is very grim. Ideally we aim at producing world class professionals. But the condition of more than sixty per cent institutions is not so rosy. Challenges are very big and need to be addressed.

The first and most important problem is the dearth of learning resources. India is a country with vast population and less resources. The new technologies offer vast opportunities for progress in all walks of life. But the focus should not be on installing

hardware but creating new, high-quality content such as intelligent teaching systems and tools that will help students to hone basic skills both hard and soft and developing content in multiple Indian languages.

A Large part of population stays in rural area. The condition of the colleges in cities is not so good, what to say about rural area. The condition over there is very sad. Corona crisis has exposed it very badly. In the absence of electronic gadgets the students are unable to cope up with their studies when the whole family has one smart phone or none at all. It is the responsibility of the institutions and Government to equip the institutions with sophisticated technologies such as smart board , LCD projectors, facility for power point presentation etc.

In Indian scenario we have divergent syllabus at school and college levels. Different universities have different levels of education. A standardised curriculum for students of same age is imperative, but there is no such standardisation due to the existence of different universities in different states. Mostly it is stale, dogmatic and outdated. It needs to be replaced with a progressive one. UGC provides guidelines but they are not helpful many times. In colleges, the courses vary significantly. Homogeneity in curriculum is essential. Besides this, the students should also be provided with the options of doing multiple courses. The lack of homogeneity becomes problematic hampering student's growth and later Country's growth

The teaching fraternity still uses old methods of evaluation which do not focus on individual differences, aptitude and interest of the students and often encourage rote memory. Albert Einstein once said, *"Everyone's a genius. But if you judge a fish on its ability to climb a tree, it will live its whole life believing that it is stupid."* the standardized testing and curriculum does not give much scope for the students' creativity. Passion and interest drops dead because of standardized tests.

New and innovative evaluation methods must be designed which may judge the all round development of the students. Many universities have adopted open –book system, but it has proved useful only to some extent. To strengthen learner centred education, time bound assignment system should also be given a serious thought.

Corona period has provided many opportunities for experimentation. Because of strict lockdown classes and examinations were taken online. This provided an opportunity for rethinking about teaching, learning and evaluation practices in India. New modules must be developed.

Semester and Trimester systems have been implemented in Maharashtra and other states to the unhappiness of faculty members who do not get sufficient teaching days in continuation leading to dissatisfaction of them. The students also are always in examination mode ready to pass, not ready to learn. Some solution must be found by the pedagogy experts.

Faculty is one important element of education. Their knowledge and teaching strategies should be refreshed from time to time. But it is not seen. The teachers also appear reluctant to update themselves many times. Many times institutions also are unwilling to send the faculties for up gradation of knowledge . The institutions and managements must encourage the teaching faculties to attend refresher courses, orientation programmes, seminars and workshops etc. to update their skills and techniques. Behaviour of the teachers, classroom dynamics, managerial qualities will enhance the quality of instructions. A teacher should look upon his teaching job, not as a profession but as a sacred vocation with a self imposed code of conduct and a positive mental approach. They must be receptive for new techniques and theories.

One important factor is the gap between the rural and urban life. One India lives in cities and the other India lives in villages. The standard of education is very different. Intelligence quotient cannot be questioned. Degree is the same. But the learning level is very different. Besides this, emotional intellectual aspect can also not be ignored. The existing rural urban disparity is quite discernible. Some solution must be found out. The urban students are exposed to the newer development of the world. It is reflected in their personality. Here, the rural students develop inferiority complex. While designing courses, this point should be kept in mind.

Syllabus should be very carefully designed. It can include topics related with agriculture , fruit preservation, food processing pesticides etc. They can opt for lower level of English focussing on communication skills with the help of text based on rural activities. Short-term Computer Literacy programmes also should be included. So that the students in rural area can be at par.

In the urban sector, Job-oriented and need based inter-disciplinary professional courses have to be part of syllabus of the higher education , with a view to nurture entrepreneurial skills in the graduates being generated every year. In the global-village context and the consumer-centred society, introduction of such new courses shall be preceded by a survey of the market demands. Students must be exposed to work experience and on the job training.

The multiple and diverse responsibilities of higher education are ultimate key to the well-being of modern society and we can see very well that the present scenario of higher education is passing through a crucial period. There is a crossroad now. The experts

have to decide what to do now for the welfare of the students so that they can be ready to play their role efficiently both at national and international level.

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