

Sustainable educational practices in the age of Pandemics

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ABSTRACT- *Sudden emergence of Covid 19, locked down almost every domain of life including education. Millions of students of 17 countries are affected by partial or complete closures of institutes in order to control the pandemic, out of them most affected are our school children. This situation compelled our educational institutions to switch to online education. We use to think that we have adequate resources and skills to do that but ground reality revealed how unprepared we are. Neither are the teachers comfortable and skilled enough to give online education nor students' learning is up to the mark. It is being reported now and then, that online education is just a formality, students are getting demotivated, they are having headache, backpain and eye problems etc. Parents are also not satisfied with the teaching – learning process that is going in the name of online education. It seems like, we are hoping that very soon everything will be normal and we will return back to our class rooms. But we should keep it very clear in mind that covid-19 is not going to leave us for good. It is going to become Integral part of our lives. Even if it gradually disappears, some other epidemic or pandemic will continue to create crisis in this global world.*

To become resilient, it is better to take some serious measures of permanent nature. We have to reshape our educational practices by adopting innovations and system transformations. This is the time to use blended learning on regular basis, providing online and offline training to the teachers in using LMS (Moodal, Google classroom, Mooc), video conferencing tools (zoom, google meet etc), google tools (canvas, ipicci, padlet etc) as well as in e- resource generation.

Developing policy frame work for online education, paradigm shift in pedagogy, common-knowledge platform, competency education based on also proved useful. In addition to this special attention will be required to give on students' mental and emotional well-being, daily habits related to immunity improvement and hygiene as well as stress management skills should be the part and parcel of the new education system. Along with above educational innovations, constraints and Challenges in adopting these practices i.e. fund shortage, net connectivity problem and digital disparity are also discussed in this paper.

Introduction

It was the starting of march when covid-19 was tip towing to make its way in India. We were little worried but used to think that we Indians have good immunity and Corona is not going to affect us much but by the end of March we saw abrupt increase in the infection cases and a countrywide lockdown which is still going and we don't know when we will come out of this. About 1.6 billion learners from 177 countries (almost representing 87% of learning community) are locked to their homes. Education system become crippled. This situation compelled our education system to switch to online mode. Teachers started taking classes through videos zoom, Google classroom etc. It seemed like our educational loss will be recovered and teaching learning will run smoothly but ground reality was presenting a different scenario. Quality of online education showed that how unprepared we were. Most of the teachers were nervous and uncomfortable in using technology, sometimes net connectivity become the problem and sometimes voice clarity. Students are not getting any motivation and lost their attention in between the classes and become indulged in some other activities on laptop and mobiles. Soon we came across such news that online education is just a formality, students are having back pain, eye problems headache and getting depressed. Parents are also not satisfied with online education. In seems that we are only doing time pass and waiting that Corona crisis will end very soon and school will open and everything will become normal. But we should keep it in our mind that we are in a long blind tunnel this time and nobody knows when we will emerge from this and even if it happens some other infection may emerge and we may come back to the same situation because this age of globalization also making the disease a globalized disease that is pandemic. Hence it is better to become resilient in place of become escapers. We should deeply rethink that how would be our

education after this Corona age so that our students' learning may continue without any obstruction and hassle. This time every institute is ready for the change. However, most are focusing on the near future measures i.e. sanitization procedures, modifying school time table and calendar, mandatory facemask, dismiss of school assembly etc., but this is the time for out of the box thinking and brainstorming to explore innovative practices for a sustainable educational system.

Research methodology:

As the situation raised after covid -19 is very unusual and new, hence Analytical and Rational Reflection methods are used after going through the blogs, articles on internet and newspaper, related to various aspects of education in Corona situations. Limitations of earlier educational practices in this unusual situation are studied, problems that are being felt by educationists in maintaining teaching learning during Corona age are analyzed to developed a new line of thought and to suggest educational practices to reshape the education in post Corona age.

Suggested Educational Practices

Some innovative practices are discussed here which can be adopted by our educational system and institutes in post corona age

1) Policy Framework for online education

To bring much needed innovations, first of all clear guidelines should be decided by eminent educationist, government, practicing teachers and techno experts that how do online education can be given for all the subjects no matter theoretical or practical in nature. How can we develop all the three domains of students learning (cognitive, affective and conative) as much as possible because presently this is the main limitation of online education that it is more or less developed. Only cognitive domain what would be motivational techniques to maintain the attention span of learners, how to do assessments in a standardized way, how to create an environment of competition and cooperation etc. should be determined in clear terms.

2). Use of blended learning on regular basis

Both online and offline education system has its own pros and cons. Online learning provides anywhere anytime access to learning at one's own pace while offline learning gives interactive satisfaction in addition to other benefits of group learning. Blending of both the mode in post Corona age can maximize the conversion of teaching in to learning. We will comeback from covid-19 with a better understanding that digital tools are implemented not substituted for the intimacy and immediacy of face-to-face learning. Through blended learning theoretical aspects notes, assignments, videos can be provided to the students before the classes, leaving precious classroom time for discussion, debate, activities, practices and higher-order skill development. That should bring in regular practice so that teachers may become well versed and efficient in using online education and can easily switch to online mode whenever required.

3) giving strategic priority to online education

In pre-covid-19 age most of the educational institutes and universities were doing something or the other with online education but very few of them had this at the center of their institute's strategic planning. At school level not much efforts were taken. Willing students themselves taking classes on apps like Byju's but the situation is absolutely changed after covid-19 crisis. Head of every institution as well as government now come to know that to be well versed in providing online education is must for a continuous institutional working. Management of online learning will be integrated into existing academic leadership structures and processes.

3) Training programs for teachers

Online and offline short term courses and workshop should be arrange immediately e after coronal lockdown for the Teachers in used in various modes of online education they should

give training in using synchronous mode of communication like Google meet at cetera and asynchronous mode of learning like model Google classroom at cetera through these apps teacher can see the faces of their students and students can raise their hands virtually when they want to ask some questions or write comment in chat box regular practice of these methods can give a teaching learning experience that is quite close to face-to-face classroom teaching giving training is not sufficient teacher should do at least 25 of their daily teaching with online mode remain in practice in addition to this they should learn to make effective videos with ppt and animations on laptops as well as using mobile . They should learn to generate quality e-content and it's uploading on net and YouTube with proper licensing. They should also be well versed in application of web based tools for mentoring (e.g. centimeter), for brain mapping (e.g. C-map), for infographics making (e.g. canvas, iPiccy), for making digital walls (padlet) and many more to bring variation and attraction in their online teaching.

4) Students training in e-learning

Students should also be trained in using advanced tools like padlet (a virtual post in note system that lets student share ideas), Flipgrid (let's teachers and students create short videos to share), synchronous dialoguing using apps like menti.com (helps in giving quick feedback), canvas and iPiccy to make infographics (used to make pictorial assignment) etc. This should be the integral part of their computer education but separate classes should be taken to make students well was in using technology for day to day learning.

5) Giving priority to well being

Being well is not an alternative to become successful but it's an essential precondition for achievement, hence it should be priorities by many ways:

Counselling and psychological support:

After weeks and months at home, normal routine of children are totally disturbed. Many will have experience economic problems and stress. They may have witnessed family members become sick, domestic violence and abuse. They might have had little opportunity to play outdoors. They may exhibit the sign of posttraumatic stress. Lot will have spent hours looking at television, mobile or playing video games. To fill this learning gap and to bring our students to their normal psychological state we will need counsellors, mental health specialist and supporting teachers.

Inculcation of habits related to health and hygiene:

Students need to be oriented to have habits of yoga and exercises and taking healthy food, avoiding junk food, habits of frequent hand wash, habits of early to bed early to rise etc. so that health and immunity can be made better. Schools would have to share responsibility of students' well-being with home and families.

6) Intensive support to lag behind schools and students:

Many of the low income in schools as well as Government schools were totally unprepared for online mode of education. In post Corona period such schools should be given more support than others. Effective government interventions can help to narrow social inequalities between schools in the same system by both channelizing financial resources and offering intensive support to high- need schools, similarly extra support will be needed to the weak and most vulnerable children to settle down and catch up.

7) Collaboration of multiple agencies:

8) Covid-19 crisis ahead underscored that government alone is not able to address the crisis this situation absolutely requires the creative collaborative efforts of various agencies in the private sector civil society and community leadership to make online learning and television broadcast works monthly for millions of student major telecom communications operators and technology companies collaborated with the government to backup service and ensure sufficient bandwidth.

8). Knowledge sharing and peer to peer learning platform:

Every institute should develop a knowledge sharing platform and depository where quality e-content is available to students according to their need as well as to teachers. Where teachers can upload lectures, videos, important links, assignments, model question papers etc. that can be accessed by students whenever they need. Students should have opportunities to share and cooperate with their peers has happen in the MOOC courses.

Challenges with implementation of innovations and their mitigation

Drinking challenges is always challenging due to some or other reason same is true here to change the status quo of present educational system is not easy a number of constraints may come in the path some are discussed below

1) To maintain students' attention span

This is very challenging task after taking classes for 1 to 2 hours, students begin to feel exhausted and started indulging into other activities on internet what we do when such situation comes in our classroom teaching we use teaching aids some activities discussions stories at 17 same things with little modifications can be applied in online Celsius feedback, quizzes, small competitive and cooperative activities of making pellets pictograms related to taught concept at cetera can keep them motivated to learn for a longer time we can also learn from video games how do they maintain the interest of the players in the game by providing motivation in the form of rewards of many types same thing can be applied while teaching that giving saying some motivational terms giving clapping giving coins small gifts at cetera can keep the motivation of the students high.

2). Prompting Social, Moral and Emotional development

One of the biggest short-coming of online education that students are leading an isolated life, they have very little chances or interaction with their peer group. Feeling of collaboration and cooperation is disappearing among the students which is not good for their socialization process the in which schools used to play most significant role. Again the moral values and emotional support the students used to gain indirectly from their teachers are no more available to them. Concept of all-round development of students through education is somehow diminishing.

These problems can be solved by making small groups of students in which they are free to discuss anything with their peers, by giving group projects and by arranging frequent one to one online meeting of teacher with students.

3) To deal with digital disparity:

The move towards online education has exposed the digital disparity that exist between rural urban learners as well as between low middle and high income in Asus devices and net connectivity

Most of the Government and government aided schools as well as low-income public schools are underfinanced and unprepared for online switch. Addressing these inequalities is a complex challenge. What should be the solution? Many countries started live television broadcast to air video and lesson plans. China is also offering mobile data packages and telecom subsidies. South Carolina schools have developed mobile hotspots to low Income neighbourhoods by equipping school bus with Wi-Fi. Same experiments can also be adopted in India. At places where availability of devices and broadband is limited learning can be adapted with the existing technology i.e. by television, radio, cell-phone etc.

4) Language barrier:

Most of the e-content is available in English only and whatever available in Hindi and other regional languages is not of good quality. This is a big problem for state board students. To

resolve this problem state board should tie up with local agencies to develop as well as to translate quality e-content in regional languages.

5) Economic constraints:

Covid-19 crisis has destroyed the economy of entire world, that may lead to economic recession. In order to overcome this economic crisis, government as well as private sector may cut down their educational budget. This fund shortage may become big barrier in the path of innovations because arrangement of blended and online education, student well-being setups, may need extra funds. In this regard government should be farsighted enough to take public participation and cooperation from NGOs, charitable foundations, UNICEF to arrange funds for implementation of innovations and training of teachers.

Conclusion

Covid-19 crisis is a sudden shock but definitely it will not be the last. It has changed how millions across the world are being educated and we are witnessing a rush towards online education. But online and virtual learning is not the substitute of institutional learning. Schools and colleges are not just a place of learning but of socialization, corporation, competition, care and sensitivity for community. In fact school environment helps in all round development of student to more or less extent, but all such objectives cannot be achieved by online education. Hence a wise practice will be to use technology as an essential part of teaching learning so that we can become resistant for such future crisis in today's unpredictable world.

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