Innovate to Create; Reforms in Higher Education

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Abstract—*Students are surrounded with a borderless world offering limitless connection, data. The exposure that the current generation is exposed to, is multiplying two-fold. Students can choose to access knowledge and participate in dialogue on a global scale. They need education delivered in ways that are compatible with and support their world-view and their bond with communication technology. Today's education is multidimensional and needs rapid innovation and creativity.*

Whether it is continuous improvement or complete transformation, the ultimate aim is the same – to build future practice that is better than the past. Students need to build a strong base in order to build a stronger career. Being innovative is about looking way beyond what they are currently doing well, identifying the great ideas of tomorrow and putting them into practice. Higher education need to be innovative, which makes the learning environment more exciting, challenging and rewarding.

One cannot predict the future, but one can surely innovate to create such robust modules that help enhance the role of higher education. We do not have a prediction of how tomorrow will look like, but we know that flexible process models are able to face the changes comparing with fixed-style models. Governments adopt the policy of free basic education, these policies have a wide range of standards, quality and infrastructure. Therefore, a focus strategy on the essential skills should be implemented. These skills include the following;

- *Thinking creatively in order to compete in the volatile market;*

- *Finding innovative solutions for existing and future problems with recommendations;*

- *The ability to find better alternatives.*

So why do we need innovation in education? This is not such a straightforward question when many school districts still consider installing interactive whiteboards in front of the classrooms as the way forward. These technology "solutions" have to do with the belief that simply putting "tech equipment" into classrooms is going to improve teaching and learning. The goal of this paper is not to address this broad issue but to study and characterize the emergence and opportunities for growth of an 'educational tool' industry.

Keywords: *Concept Based Education, Education, Higher Education, Inclusive Education*

1. INTRODUCTION

We live in an inescapable world of mutuality. People find themselves surrounded in overwhelming socio-cultural crises. We witness distress: rapid increases in crimes, unemployment, environmental degradation, endangered species, and loss of languages, poverty, malnutrition, disease, militarism, and violent death. Yet also in this time, the amount of money, capital, technology, and trade worldwide has increased manifold, as have the number of health facilities and schools and educational institutions. Clearly, the Utopia that these institutions promised is very far from being realized. It is clear that we cannot continue down this path it is neither sustainable nor morally just. But what is the alternative, particularly to 19th century-style factory-schooling?

When all children, regardless of their differences, are educated together, everyone benefits—this is the cornerstone of inclusive education. Inclusive systems provide a better quality education for all children and are instrumental in changing discriminatory attitudes. Schools provide the context for a child's first relationship with the world outside their families, enabling the development of social relationships and interactions. Respect and understanding grow when students of diverse abilities and backgrounds play, socialize, and learn together.

Visionaries such as Gandhi, Tagore and Aurobindo, among others –left us with several alternatives. In their writings and their experiments, each tried to envision a better reality for India. They believed that India could only grow and regenerate itself by seeking out those beliefs, values, languages, cultures, knowledge and wisdoms upon which she had developed and lived. In their own unique ways, these innovators tried to create alternative visions of living and paths for India. Today, as we feel ourselves increasingly being swept away by these global crises, and especially the crises of 'schooling,' perhaps it is time to revisit their ideas and experiments in higher education.

What distinguishes Gandhi, Tagore and Aurobindo, from the rest is their effort to situate education in a complete spiritual,

political, socio-cultural, and economic vision of transformation. For them, education germinated from a context and it was just as important to transform this context, as it was to transform the system of education. To varying degrees, all four were engaged in India's freedom struggle, and their experiences around this struggle inspired them to imagine a different conception of freedom and, with it, a different India.

The current crises of the 'schooled' and of schooling require radical new thinking, new dialogue, and new action. While this radical discourse is being driven by thinkers in other parts of the world (mainly from industrialized countries), learning from the radicalism of these four visionaries could do much to resuscitate the intellectually-stagnated discourse on education in India. By deeply probing into their critiques, frameworks and experiments, we hope to invigorate the education discourse and offer fresh insight into the development of learning societies for 21st century India.

2. OBJECTIVES

1. What has been the impact of Gandhi, Tagore and Aurobindo, How have they influenced (or been co-opted by) the education system?

2. How have their methodologies been applied, further evolved, and re-contextualized

3. How is their understandings about the linkages between education and societal development relevant today?

4. What can we learn from their values, critiques, activities, and visions to better understand the challenges in education before us?

3. TODAY'S REALITY; A CALL UNANSWERED

President Pranab Mukherjee, at a convocation ceremony held at the National Institute of Technology (NIT), Delhi stated that "Students graduating from premier institutions like IITs and NITs should not restrict themselves to merely earning good salaries and leading a comfortable life but should take steps to help their communities based on sound knowledge.

He further stressed by stating that "the success of these young men and women would be measured by the amount of good solutions they provide to their community and nation once they step out in the outer world. President Pranab Mukherjee advised students that. "I would like to advise you that the skills which you have acquired, the knowledge which has been instilled in you…that need not necessarily be settled for a comfortable life or a high salary package to promote the product of a particular multi-national company where salesmanship is important. But surely, an engineering graduate from institutions like NITs and IITs are something more than that. Your success will be measured not merely by how much you are earning and providing comfort to your family and to other members of your family but much more,"

How many papers you are reading, what initiatives you are taking in research, what benefits and facilities you are providing to your community based on scientific and technological knowledge. That will be the measurement (of success) of the students coming out of first grade engineering and technical institutions," he said. Mukherjee, who has himself been a teacher before he took the political plunge, asked the young minds to keep their feet on ground as he told them that knowledge will give them the power to live with "modesty and humility."

"Never believe you have learned everything in life… In real life, you will learn every day. It is an eternal process," he said. The President said with almost 50 per cent of India's population in the average age group of 25 years, it was a great asset for the country that can be converted into tremendous wealth and opportunities.

Blending Higher Education with the Real World: A Higher Education improvement

1. Understanding of the Human Being and of Human Potential

- Its relationship to community/society

- Its relationship to Nature

- Notions of identity, diversity, and wholeness

- Significance/role of language(s)

- Senses of spirituality, freedom, and culture

2. Vision of Economic, Political, and Social System

- View of nation-state

- Economic and political philosophies

- Visions of societal relationships and interactions

- Notions of development (for what? how? by whom?), progress and success

3. Concept of Learning

- Processes of learning and/or education

- Relationships and roles within learning and/or education

- Learning environments and spaces

- Notions of human intelligences, knowledge's, wisdom, creativity, motivation

- Goals of learning and/or education

How can we advance Higher Education?

- Ensure that educators have the training, flexibility, and resources to teach students with diverse needs and learning styles

- Enable the entire community—including mainstream and special educators, social workers, parents, and students—to work together and participate in the design, delivery, and monitoring of education, thereby reframing inclusive education as a shared responsibility

- Hold governments accountable for implementing antidiscrimination legislation, legal mandates for inclusion, and policies to remove barriers

There are two major trends in the world that pose a fundamental challenge--and many opportunities--to our educational system. One is the world is shifting from an industrial economy to a knowledge economy. The other is the rising generation--brought up on the Internet--is very differently motivated to learn.

4. CONCLUSION

Over the last decade, an enormous amount of energy has been expended on the need for new federal and state policies around 21st century learning. However, if 21st century education is ever going to make a difference in the lives of students, teachers must have the support they need to do this work in classrooms every day.

The teaching critical thinking and problem solving, communication, collaboration, and creativity and innovation are not new concepts for educators. In fact, they are the basis of great teaching, and most teachers aspire to teach in a manner that incorporates these strategies. We now know, based on the work of the 21st Century Skills movement, that

every child needs these skills to be an effective citizen and participant in the new global economy. Teachers and education support personnel have a huge role to play that ensure that every student is adequately prepared. This study intends to help prepare better educators in a new global landscape.

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