Re-Structuring Higher Education throughModern Terminologies

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ABSTRACT

Every underdeveloped country has a cause and effect relationship between economic, social conditions and education. India is no exception to it. History of India is quite divergent and a mixture of various events. However, the educated strata have always been formed up by the higher class and upper middle class of the society.Most of them completed their education abroad and took part in the political life of India. This is a principal reason why the post - independence period has witnessed lesser participation and formal enrolment of Indian students in the education sector. Several educational committees hadbeen constituted for increased involvement of students in primary, secondary and higher education. A landmark thought cropped up in the mind of the then educationists and scholars which had actually revolutionised the education sector within decades. It was the starting of ' Correspondence Education 'initially that was later replaced by the umbrella term open or distance learning.The word democratisation is actually a political term. It is also largely used in academic fields for various types of research works, collection of study materials, curriculum or understanding of any concept. However, democratisation of education is a different concept. It is definitely a theoretical idea yet most of the educational institutions as well as developing governments are trying to accept this and implement this in a positive manner. Education is one of the most essential parameters of development for any country. It determines a nation's literacy rate, international edition, development , resource utilisation, economy and above all, it's all round progress. Education is an umbrella term which encompasses the gaining of knowledge in any educational institution by teaching - learning process. In the recent past inclusive education and e-learning has also been included in its arena.

KEYWORDS: Introduction, democratisation and its requisites, survey sample, concept of non - formal education, adult education, e-learning


I.   INTRODUCTION

Education can be termed as an accelerating or 'catalysing agent' for any kind of national progress or development. Therefore, reformation of this sector is quite essential for the overall development of any country. Distance Education is a modern and flexible system of education devoid of any kind of formal restrictions except the minimum age limit. Both the centre as well as the statesof India at present have a large number of distance learning institutions. India has the largest network of distance learning , second to China. Inclusive education is an extension of scope of ordinary schools to include children from all backgrounds. Inclusive education is the way of dealing with differences and creating an equality based learning environment to promote the all round development of students - professional, vocational, technical, social, moral and cultural irrespective of differences in caste, creed, race, gender and economic efficiency. It is in fact a broader term for increased participation of students in the educational sector and thereby elimination of exclusion.

DISTANCE LEARNING IN MODERN TIMES

Open and Distance Learning (ODL) encompasses Open Learning, Distributed Learning and Flexible Learning. Its basic tenets are - 'any time' , 'any place'and 'anywhere'. It is a teaching - learning process or ambience in which teachers and learners are separated by time and space. It is a way of imparting knowledge or delivering formal education in which the students are not present in the traditional classroom and face-to-face interaction circuit. Technical medium along with the use of information and communication technologyreplace the conventional classroom based education. Transaction of curriculum takes place with the help of self-study materials like print media, television, audio-video tapes, videoconferencing, teleconferencing, chat sessions, electronic mail, internet and world wide web.

The major objectives of open and distance learning in India are -
1) Democratisation of Higher Education
2) Redress social and educational inequality
3) Include working men, women, housewives and other adult learners
4) Strike the grass - root level of population in remote areas
5) Provide an innovative university level education system with greaterdegree of flexibility
6) Freedom of choice in combination of courses
7) Opportunity to all strata for upgradation of skill and qualification
8) To develop education as a life-long activity so that people can develo[pknowledge about new arenas.
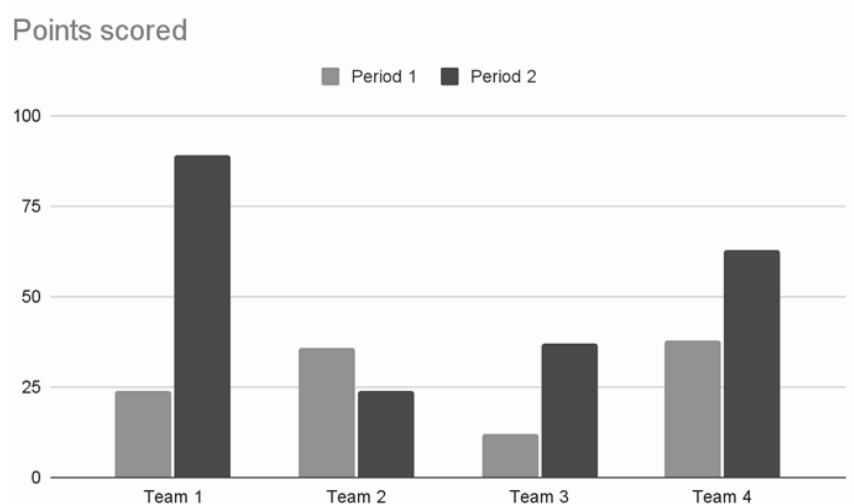
The following chart shows student ratio in some of the courses in IGNOU in theyear 2013 (Source : interpreted from www.researchgate.com)
Team 1 = Agriculture, HumanitiesTeam 2 = MBA, MCA
Team 3 = Environmental Science, CommerceTeam 4 = Science, Diploma

Distance education centers have been providing over 250 courses of study to the learners all over the world. There are 13 State Open Universities at present which have engaged approximately 22 lakh students. IGNOU collectively consists of 4 million students at present. It is a part of Commonwealth of Learning (CoL), Canada and stands as the 'Centre of Excellence in Distance Education'.

DEMOCRATISATION AND ITS NECESSITY
Traditional system of education has largely been autocratic in nature. Teacher student interaction would be very minimal. Teacher played an authoritative role and the process of decision making. That was a kind of imposition of ideas on students without enabling them to prosper their own thinking capacity. Students could not find any other alternative pattern of analytical development as well as self exploration because they were largely entrapped within the rules and agenda of the classroom. This unproductivity was the main reason behind the birth of a new model of education. Its main objective has been to focus on individual welfare , mental development, factual knowledge and in the process ensuring a nation's progress.
As democratisation is a relatively modern concept, there are several factorswhich prompted its rapid growth in the early years of the 21st century. Some of the identified causes are -
1) To mark a shift from the traditional process of education in which theviews of the student would be least significant
2) To reform the autocratic nature of the educators or teachers
3) Create a better teaching - learning environment
4) Enable the students to explore themselves and a variety of ideas
5) Develop analytical thinking among the students
6) Assist students to gain factual information apart from the bookishknowledge
7) To make the student an active classroom participation
8) Enhancement of observation,   rationality and empiricism amongstudents
9) To include the views of students while preparing the educationalcurriculum
10) Provide a breeding ground for several new concepts and terms.

Therefore these are some of the reasons which have contributed to the development of the concept of democratisation of education.

SURVEY SAMPLE

A survey had been conducted on the implementation of the concept ofdemocratisation of education. Following are its highlights

Two schools have been surveyed in North 24 parganas, Kolkata, West Bengal in January 2014. One is a private school named Auxilium conventand the other is a government school named State Girls High School.

1)   Research question

To what degree has education been democratised ? Are the school authorities , students , teachers even aware of the concept ? Is it implemented in a proper form of partially just for name sake.

2)   Hypothesis

It is assumed that the teachers and students are aware of the concept of democratisation as it is a technical era. They are also implementing it in its fullest sense.

3)   Research Methodology

Face to face interview on the basis of random sampling.

4)   Participants involved

Students of standard 11 and 12, Principal of the school, subject teachers.

5)   Highlights of Research work -

Criteria	Private School	Government School
Teacher's awareness on democratisation	Aware	Partially aware
Student's awareness on democratisation	Aware	Aware
Implementation byteachers	Moderate	Minimal
Role of institutionalhead	Encourage the teachersfor a conducive classroom environment	No initiative
Student 's role in itsimplementation	100% but get the ground to implement only undera few teachers	100% but rarely get anyground of implementation
Satisfaction level ofstudents	Moderate	Minimum

6)   Observation

The hypothesis is partially correct and partially wrong. Truely, the institutional authorities, students as well as teachers are aware of the concept but do not implement it properly. Teachers seem to be satisfied with their own teaching technique but the students are not. They want greater participation in the teaching - learning process.

7)   Remedies

On the basis of the above observation, following remedies can be suggested for the creation of a congenial environment -

a)   Regulation by the educational authority for the teachers to observecooperative teaching methods in the classroom

b)   Allowing students to design the daily curricular

c)   Training of teachers so that they can allow students to put forwardtheir ideas freely

d)   Assign students with creative inquiry work on certain non bookishtopics

CONCEPT OF NON - FORMAL EDUCATION

Since the mid 1980s concepts of socialisation, conditioning, communication andlearning have begun to fuse into the integrated and broad aspect of non - formal education. It is a highly professional and task - oriented course. Its ability is determined by its competence to meet the basic needs of survival and organisational necessities rather than giving importance to certification andabstract achievements. The space and time factor in this system is open ended. Learning as well as transmission of knowledge is done flexibly and adjusted according to the changing needs of the environment. Peer learning holds a significant command over exchange

and distribution of knowledge.

Development of human resources is one of its basic tenets. Emphasis is given on the proper transmission of knowledge , skills and attitude to the targetpopulation. It encompasses various sub components like content, material design and methodology. Delivery system requires the use of appropriate technology. The feedback channel can include pre - delivery, concurrent or postdelivery elements or a mixture of these. The technology of the delivery system can be finely tuned in accordance with the feedback linkage.

It also has a blend of political and economic dimensions. Political and economic motivations blend together to use the learning network to link people's need to the system of production and consumption in an efficient and effective manner.

ADULT EDUCATION

Adult education is a modern system in which adults are imparted education on various courses but under an informal milieu. It helps the drop outs in continuing their education as a side activity after getting married or involved in some kind of activity. The needs of learners are given highest priority.

Following are its essential features -
1) Creation of awareness on need and importance and need of education
2) Developing a conducive ambience for the adults
3) Motivate learner and community people to cooperate
4) Organise orientation and training programmes
5) Monitor and evaluation
6) Prepare study material
7) Setting up rural libraries
8) Exchange idea and action between individual and gro

E - LEARNING

E - learning refers to the use of technology in teaching - learning process. It enables people to learn anytime and anywhere. Technology overcomes thelimitation of time, distance and resources. The most essential advantage of it is instant and just-in-time information. Virtual classrooms, audiom- video modes, instant messaging, and content management have been designed and developed.

Following are its characteristics -
1) Delivering of self paced courses by internet, intranet, LAN, CD - ROM ,DVD
2) Use of multimedia like graphics and animation along with text
3) Interactive environment
4) Book marking of important contents
5) Access to online experts
6) Multiple content and book availability
7) Diverse search engine
8) Flexibility

II. CONCLUSION

Although some of the modern developments have not taken its fullest shape, itis undoubtedly one of the best ways of transmission of knowledge. However, if the educators take it as an ego that their dominance is lessening in the teaching domain, it would be definitely a stumbling block in the path for realisation ofthe objective of uniform implementation. Proper development of these concepts can take place only when the educators, institutions, learners and above all, the government accept its content in an affirmative way and shift away from the traditional biasness. A combined positive effort of teachers as well as students will only help in realising its basic objectives.

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