## Teaching through a Pandemic: Glimpses of how Education would Evolve

Widespread experimentation around a new idea due to the occurrence of unexpected events is embarked by a tectonic shift in business and society. For instance, fixing the Y2K bug, established the credibility and leadership of Indian engineers in addressing technological problems worldwide. The leading IT giants viz; IBM, Adobe, Alphabeta, Microsoft all are today headed by Indian born engineers, placing, Indians as world leaders in the sector. At present, we are living amidst what is potentially one of the greatest threats in a lifetime and the COVID-19 pandemic is transforming every economic sector and business processes and education is no exception.

This crisis-driven period is pushing educators globally to experiment with remote teaching and learning approaches and if the experimentation of digital learning proves to be successful, the education sector will change forever. But how will we know that the remote teaching approaches prove to be successful? The answer lies in carefully analysing three vital questions about the business model of Higher Education and the accessibility to quality education.

**Assessing the Training needs required for a change in mindset and behaviour of faculty members and students:**

A shift from the traditional educational pattern to online smart classrooms require the need to assess the training needs for making a change in the mindset of both the stakeholders i.e. the teachers and the learners. There is a digital divide as all the faculty members are not comfortable with virtual classrooms as the majority of them rely more on flip charts and blackboards. The seniors might not be digital-savvy in comparison to youngers who are adapted in digital technology.

As students enter the online classrooms, they might feel that many teachers are not well equipped with the multimedia presentation with graphics and notations. Students, in turn, are likely to feel distracted, lack of zeal or as if they don't belong to a peer group or a college cohort in case of online classes in contrast to the campus life which instils a sense of competition and motivation in them to excel.

To develop a successful model, colleges and universities need to use this moment to carefully assess what training is needed to provide a smooth experience.

**Redesigning the Curriculum: The Hybrid Model**

Educators need to give serious thought to understand the operational excellence needed in implementing the present curriculum through online classes. They even need to demarcate the topics that require little face to face or human interaction with those that require, personalized problem-solving approach, research-based teaching and mentorship. The topics that do not require personal interaction, can be recorded as a multimedia presentation and can be delivered through technological platforms to a very large number of students at low cost. By such approach, the colleges would have more resources at their disposal for the

students and even the students can use the precious time on activities that require face to face interactions and cannot be done remotely like group assignments, field projects, social networking and alike. The need is to assess, are the stakeholders prepared for the hybrid model?

Educators have to experiment and understand which classes will successfully run through remote approach and which ones are to be run within the campus. They must well document the experiences to design the courses, their delivery mechanism and evaluation methods.

**Improvement in Technological Infrastructure:**

Undoubtedly, before digital learning can take off, many software and hardware complications are to be resolved. Digital technologies like artificial intelligence, cloud, machine learning, have to be deployed at a large scale. On the hardware side, digital inequalities and bandwidth capacity need to be looked upon. Online education, moreover, amplifies the digital divide not only among the students due to accessibility of advanced technology and audio-visual gadgets by few students but also among colleges and universities having better IT infrastructure and trained staff compared to those with poorer IT facilities and manpower.

There shall be a need for upgrading the technology to accommodate large class size along with providing a personalized experience. Facilitators and students should discuss issues involved and contribute to technological development in those areas.

The present forced social distancing is compiling trial and error experiences to find workable solutions to ensure the success of virtual learning. Students and teachers both are readjusting and are recalibrating to innovate new methods for fruitful engagement and learning. Course content, as well as assessment and examination methods, have to be redesigned to suit the online needs. The present time experiences under the shadow of the pandemic will provide insight so as to train the educators and shall act as a significant input to help them transit from traditional to the new virtual pattern of teaching and learning in higher education.

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