EDUCATIONAL TRANSFORMATION POST COVID-19 IN INDIA

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ABSTRACT

Policies and strategies adopted by government institutions can play a significant role in the field of education. The new education policy and the outbreak of the Covid 19 pandemic has played a pivotal role in bringing changes into the current education system. The age old saying that change is the only constant was clearly evident in the post Covid scenario where institutions had no choice but to accept and adopt to the change. The current policies require a pro-active approach to be adopted by leaders to incorporate e-learning & life-long learning as a means to transform education to meet the challenges that Covid has brought. It is imperative on policy makers in education to come up with conceptual models for emergency transition to e-Learning. Taking into consideration the challenges already faced by the current education system policies should be developed keeping in mind what policies are required and what challenges have to be face during implementation.

INTRODUCTION

After the briefing of Dr Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus, WHO director-general at a media briefing stating that the COVID-19 pandemic that was declared a pandemic was not just a public health crisis but was going to affect and touch every sector and that every individual and sector had to be involved in the fight, turned out to be a warning call for all sectors. The risks that organizations and sectors face today are beyond borders as the world has become increasingly interconnected. This was seen during the COVID-19 pandemic as the national borders could not stop the spread of the virus nor the impact it had on every sector including the education sector. Regardless of the level of education, gender, standard of living the pandemic did affect everyone. However, if we consider the change in educational institutions and the way learning took place post COVID-19 in India, a large number of challenges were faced during the implementation process as there was a huge divide in the way education took place in the rural and urban India. On the one hand students who were from the privileged background were eager and able to learn due to internet connectivity and other facilities provided by their educational institutions, those from the rural and disadvantaged backgrounds often remained shut out from education when their institutions were under lockdown. The pandemic exposed the many inadequacies and inequality in the existing education system ranging from access to broadband, lack of computers needed for online education, lack of management and policy implementation to provide for a better education

system and the gap in the rural and urban education system irrespective of the economic backgrounds (Andreas Schleicher,2020).

If we look into the innovation in the education sector it has been seen that COVID-19 played a huge impact in education and how educators after the outbreak of the pandemic adopted to new methods to continue the process of teaching and learning. Remote learning became a new normal for both learners and educators. If we talk about the changes that were adopted during the pandemic which without any doubt led to changes in the traditional education system but could not have been a permanent solution post the pandemic. The current scenario demands for bold changes that are beyond classroom teaching and instructions by educational institutions, scholars, policy makers and researchers in order to make educational systems more dynamic and resourceful.

It is not only the curriculum that needs to change but also how curriculum should be designed to meet crisis and other situations. Teacher's training, methods of teaching and learning, in fact a revamp of the current education system as the present generation will have to thrive in a globalized world where traditional skills and values are less important (Wagner and Dintersmith,2016). With the rise in AI technology other major challenge that is faced is that the skills related to recognition, memorization, collection, storing and retrieving are also on a decline. The current AI age demands for educators to be updated on teaching skills and tools and students to be updated on use of learning tools. One cannot do without technology and with time this dependency will only increase. Hence, it becomes very important for policy makers and implementation agencies to work on learning policies that meet the needs and demands of the current globalized education system.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Post COVID-19 various changes were incorporated into the education system and there was also an increase in the number of teachers training programs to keep them updated on current tools and technologies that can make learning interesting and fruitful. Another purpose of educational institutions to keep their staff updated was also because of the situation they had to encounter after the outbreak of the COVID-19 where majority of teachers were not well trained, or had no knowledge about how to conduct online classes. The current advances in technology provide ample opportunities for educators to employ various skills to design a curriculum that can meet the present as well the future needs of educators, students, learners and the industry as a whole.

Learning is an ongoing and continuous process and it only adds on to our experiences as we age, one cannot deny that learning comes to us irrespective of whether one likes it or not, the only difference being either it is forced or is voluntary (Peter Jarvis,2020). The pandemic clearly exposed the unwillingness of majority of institutions to only adopt to those changes that were important for their survival and the same happened even in educational institutions. The education system had become stagnant with the same old teaching methods and lack of training to educators, and even if training was ever imparted, they were either mandatory and lacked effectiveness in how the learning was implemented at the workplace. The task of an education institution today is not just including learning and training process as a routine activity that the institution is bound to undergo but it should be more of a process that leads to learning so that it is reflected in hoe educators impart these to their students and how students benefit and implement from the learning process. With increasing growth of online tools and AI it has become imperative on policy makers

to work on policies that lead to lifelong learning, this shall help the learner to make a smooth transition from pedagogy to andragogy as life long learners. Trainers, researchers, policy makers are now working not only on transformation in the field of education but also the content that needs to be incorporated to solve the problem and obstacles faced by online learners. The New Education Policy of India incorporates changes that are important in the transition of the education however the implementation phase still remains a challenge as only 45 crore people of our total population have access to internet/e-learning and this data throws light on the fact that the rural population still are much deprived of the benefits that the reforms in education may bring about. This is the reason why India's transition from physical to virtual education is still a big question owing to the technological and manpower unpreparedness of the rural schools which are already faced with a myriad of other problems (Phuloma Daimary,2020). It is imperative on policy makers to design contents and policies that are more learner centric and that motivates learners to take up learning at a personal level, this concept is termed as Heutagogy, a term which describes about a holistic learning approach where learners learn at their own pace and apply these learning at their workplaces. One cannot be expected to become lifelong learners at the industry level directly although necessary measures can be adopted, however curriculum can be designed at the schools levels in such a manner that a certain level of self-learning is inculcated in the curriculum itself, this shall lead to learning practise where the learners is eager and motivated to learn new skills on his own this shall help in creating life-long learners and learning organizations (Lisa Marie Blaschke,2015).
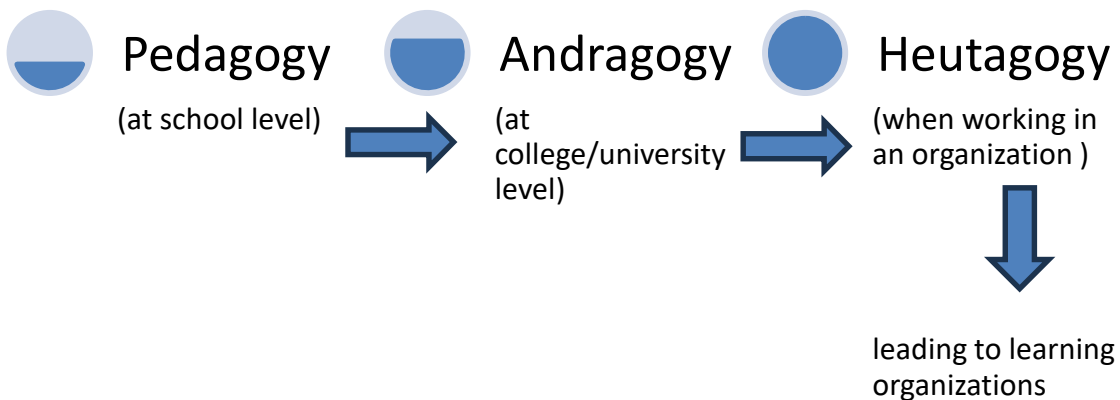

Figure: Self-created image to illustrate on the change in learning pattern

The flow chart above illustrates how a small exercise at the school and university level can lead to creation of a workforce that are eager to work, learn and implement new concepts and skills that lead to the creation of a learning organization and this is possible if the government and policy makers are involves in a holistic policy making approach and also understanding the obstacles, they may face in the implementation process.
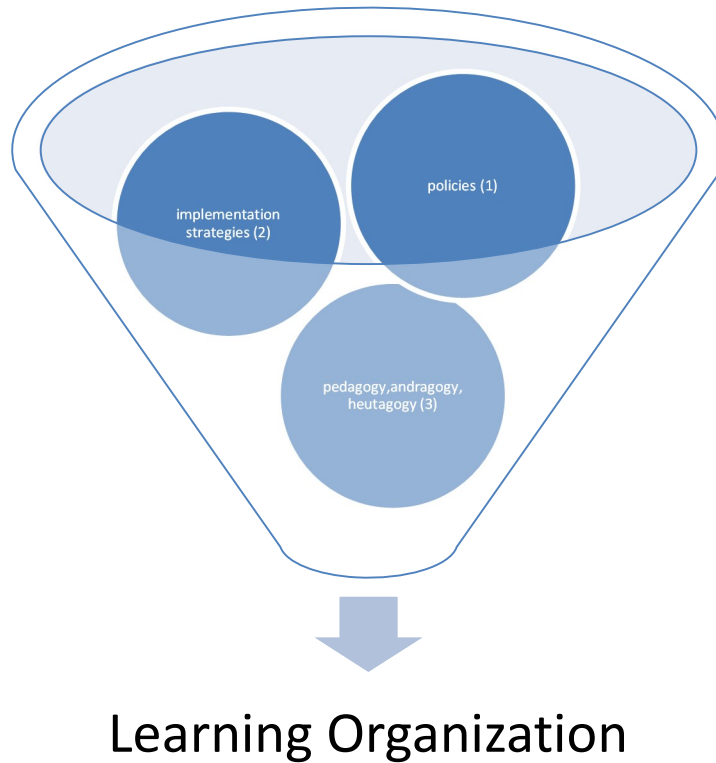
Learning Organization

Figure 2: Self-created flow chart to illustrate how all the three concepts can lead to a learning organization.

The concept of heutagogy is mainly to shift the focus from the teacher to the learner and making the process of learning more engaging and fruitful.

METHODLOGY

Data for the article has been gathered from various websites, journals, policy documents, articles and reports on the impact of COVID 19 on the education system and also the future of education post COVID 19 in India. The following points were kept in mind while selecting the data:

- ➢ Preparedness of schools and institutions to deal to the crisis
- ➢ Level of teacher's skills and digital literacy pre and post COVID-19
- ➢ What measures were adopted that learning did not stop both at rural and urban levels
- ➢ Government policies pre and post the pandemic
- ➢ Role of Heutagogy post COVD 19

With the help of extensive data analysis, the researcher divided the study into two phases:

PHASE 1	PHASE 2

| Problems faced by educators and students after the pandemic, this dealt with various factors like:

➢ Lack of technological knowledge
➢ What effect the crisis had on continued learning
➢ Lack of technological skill among the teaching section (educators and trainers)
➢ Poor internet connectivity
➢ The unbridgeable rural and urban divide | New policies, studies and measures adopted by the government, institutions and various agencies post the pandemic and the changes seen in the education system. Some changes that were evident are:

➢ More training to impart technological know-how among trainers and educators
➢ More policies to increase internet coverage in rural schools
➢ More focus on digitalization
➢ Blended learning modes
➢ Remote learning
➢ The implementation of the New Education Policy 2019 |

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

As schools were already following traditional methods of teaching and learning, the pandemic brought out problems in the education system and why it is important for both teachers and students to stay technologically advanced and updated on new teaching and learning platforms. After the immediate onset of the pandemic the reason why most teachers faced problem in conducting online and virtual classes was because most teachers were neither trained nor had any knowledge as to how online classes were conducted and also did not have knowledge about the tools that could facilitate taking online classes. Where internet availability still helped children and professionals to cope up with the current change and adapt themselves to the new normal in the cities, the rural part had a different struggle and story all together. The educations ministry's budget for digital e-learning was slashed to Rs 469 crore in 2020-21 the year COVID struck from Rs 604 crore the previous year. (Kaushik Deka,2021). With the help of the various articles and documents reviewed the researcher has listed out the following point that outlines some of the most impacted areas of education in India post the outbreak of Covid-19.

➢ Disruption in educational activities
➢ Lack of teacher's preparedness to support digital learning
➢ Loss of instructional time and its dependency on learning
➢ Loss in the student assessment system
➢ Loss of skilled labour leading to economic crisis
➢ Increase in unemployment due to lack of technical know how

Many challenges had been faced by both teachers and students after the onset of Covid-19. The educational institutions took up the challenge of meeting needs of students at such crucial time and adapted to an entirely new form of learning i.e. online learning using various platforms, as adapting to the virtual mode of learning was the only option available to reduce the spread of the pandemic.

CHANGES POST COVID-19

➢ The implementation of the New Education Policy 2019
➢ Many new policies of government to support digital learning and also involvement of self-help groups to facilitate the process of learning in both rural and urban areas.
➢ Measures to increase internet connectivity in rural areas
➢ Mission to create more skilled labour through various schemes and policies
➢ Skill enhancement among educators through continuous training to improve the quality of online education.

Heutagogy can an approach that can be adopted by institutions to face such crisis in the coming future, as it is a field of study that leads to continuous learning leading to life-long learning and self-directed learning. The current pandemic has taught us to be continuous learners and stay updated about new techniques and approaches in whichever field we belong to. The pandemic has not affected only one sector but almost all sectors, which points into the problems in almost all sectors. irrespective to whatever field one belongs to life-long learning is the one best solution to minimize facing such situations in the near future.

The positive impact that COVID-19 has brought forward in the field of education have been illustrated in the figure given below:
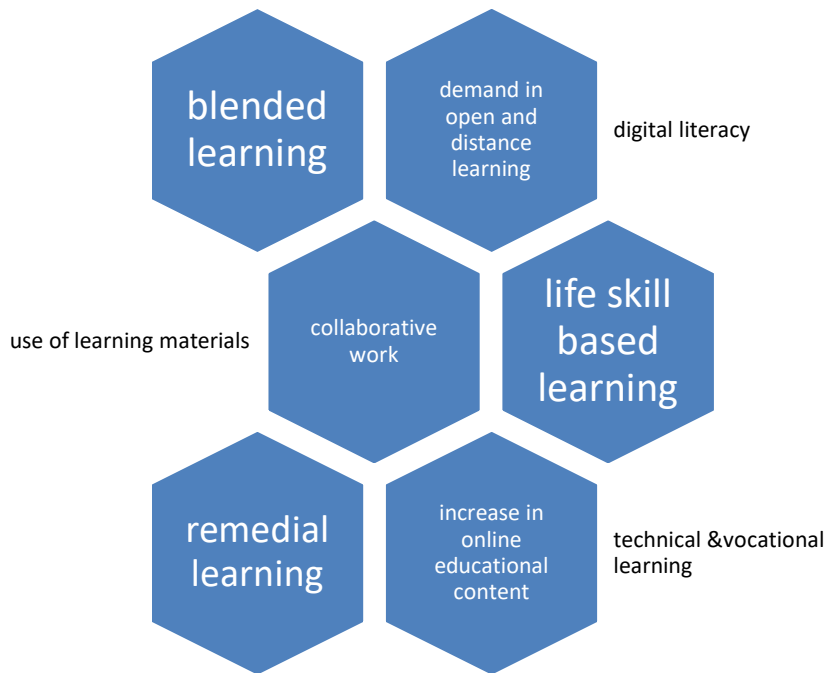

Figure 3: self-constructed diagram illustrating the positive impact of COVID-19 on education

CONCLUSION

The researcher in the study has outlined various impacts of Covid-19 on the education system in India and why there is need for good leaders. The recent pandemic may have a lot of negatives but has brought forward various opportunities for change in pedagogical approaches and shifting from face to face to a virtual education system at all levels of education. As no one is sure as to when the pandemic shall get over, a gradual move towards online education is the only new normal can be seen. Combination of technology with training may help in solving a lot of issues pertaining to online learning. This requires upgrading the online service platform to meet the required volume of demands in the field of education. Mobilization of service providers is very important to have a smooth and proper transition. The paper has not covered statistical analysis on the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic in education in India however, in-depth analysis with statistical data can be undertaken.

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