

EDUCATION AND INTERNATIONAL COLLABORATION IN THE DIGITAL AGE

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Abstract

The use of information and communication technologies in education can play a crucial role in providing new and innovative forms of support to teachers, students and the learning process more broadly. Teaching and learning in the digital age combine traditional and modern approaches to make education more holistic and dynamic for the students. The primitive days are slowly heading toward exit doors, as there is now a shift in how teaching and learning take place. Instead of blackboards and chalks or paper and pens you will see, computers, audio-visual machines and other gadgets finding their way into modern classrooms. The teacher- centered system has been transformed into student- centric learning approaches. In this age of digital advancement, education has been provided via web. This shift in pedagogical medium is forcing academic institutions to rethink how they want to deliver their course content.

After the Bangalore Water Supply case, it's clear that education is indeed an industry, though teachers can't avail the benefits arising out of the Industrial Dispute Act, 1947, simply because they are not workmen.

This paper touches upon the history and development of the traditional method of education and also studies the origin of the online classes. This paper explores that how technological and digital advancement affect the education and what are the new methods of learning. The authors also tried to focus that how the teachers and students depend on artificial intelligence i.e. AI. We are also going to throw some light that how does these pandemic effects the education system and challenges faced by the teachers and students. This paper also focuses that how international collaboration effects the education.

Keywords: Education, Traditional Mode, Technology, Digitalization, AI.

Identified Problem

The Title of the paper is 'Education and International Collaboration in the Digital World'. The Researcher has focused that how education developed in India. This research also focuses on the transformation of tree classroom to online classroom and how does technology played a pivotal role during the pandemic. The main aim is to find out the international collaboration in the digital age.

Research Method

Researcher had used the secondary data for illustrating the research paper to clarify origin of education and transformation related to the education and the international collaboration.

Research Findings and Discussion

i) System of Education: Ancient Period

India is the site of one of the most ancient civilizations in the world. The Indo-European-speaking peoples who entered India in the 2nd millennium BCE established large-scale settlements and founded powerful kingdoms. In the course of time, a group of intellectuals, the Brahmins, became priests and men of learning; another group, of nobles and soldiers, became the Kshatriyas; the agricultural and trading class was called the Vaishyas; and artisans and labourers became the Shudra.

During the ancient period, two systems of education were developed, Vedic, and Buddhist. Religion was the mainspring of all activities in ancient India. It was of an all-absorbing interest and embraced not only prayer and worship but also, philosophy, morality, law, and government as well. Religion saturated educational ideals too, and the study of Vedic literature was indispensable to higher castes. The stages of instruction were very well defined. During the first period, the child received elementary education at home. The beginning of secondary education and formal schooling was marked by a ritual known as the upanayana or thread ceremony, which was restricted to boys only and was more or less compulsory for boys of the three higher castes. The Brahman boys had this ceremony at the age of 8, the Kshatriya boys at the age of 11, and the Vaishya boys at the age of 12. The boy would leave his father's house and enter his preceptor's ashrama a home situated amid sylvan surroundings. The *acharya* would treat him as his own child, give him free education, and not charge

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anything for his boarding and lodging. The pupil had to tend the sacrificial fires, do the household work of his preceptor, and look after his cattle. There were legendary acharyas like Sanandeevani and Dronacharya who taught epic heroes like Krishna and Arjuna martial skills, but what makes the Vedic period unique is the existence of sages like Gautama and Jaimini who were founder of different schools of Indian philosophy like Nyaya and Purva Mimamsa. This was a period of intense intellectual activity and speculation, which we hardly find even now. While Nyaya and Vaisheshika were theistic philosophies, Sankhya was atheistic.

Tracing back to the 5th century BC, Buddhist Education was originally taught by Lord Buddha and its key characteristic is that it is monastic and inclusive of all castes (as the caste system was widely prevalent at that time in India). Buddhism also introduced the monastic system of education. Monasteries attached to Buddhist temples served the double purpose of imparting education and of training persons for priesthood. A monastery, however, educated only those who were its members. It did not admit day scholars and thus did not cater to the needs of the entire population. The central aim of the Buddhist Education system is to facilitate the all-round and holistic development of a child's personality, be it intellectual and moral development as well as physical and mental development. The Buddhist monasteries or *Viharas* were the centres of learning where the monk was responsible for the teaching and intellectual upbringing of a pupil. To study in the monastery, the student had to willingly present himself to the teacher who in turn had to ensure the complete transformation of the pupil. Following the *Guru-Shishya* model, the method of teaching was mainly verbal where discussion formed an integral part of the education. The students were evaluated on the basis of knowledge retention, application, and behaviour.

ii) Universities

Many of the famous universities established in India during ancient period. Among the most notable universities are that evolved during this period were situated at Takshashila, Nalanda, Valabhi, Vikramshila, Odantapuri and Jagaddala. We will give you glimpses of two universities i.e. Taxila and Nalanda University of the ancient period. These universities were considered among the best centres of learning in the world. The Taxila University and Nalanda University have been declared heritage sites in the year 1980 and 2009 by the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO [19]).

a. Taxila or Takshashila University

It was a noted centre of learning and known for higher studies, including religious teachings of

Buddhism, for several centuries. It continued to attract students from around the world until its destruction in the 5th century CE. Among its noted pupils was the legendary Indian grammarian, Panini. He was an expert in language and grammar and authored one of the greatest works on grammar called *Ashtadhyayi*. Jivaka, one of the most renowned physicians in ancient India, and Chanakya (also known as Kautilya), a skilled exponent of statecraft, both studied here. Students came to Takshashila from Kashi, Kosala, Magadha and also from other countries in spite of the long and arduous journey they had to undertake.

b. Nalanda University

The ancient Nalanda was a centre of learning from the 5th century CE to 12th century CE. The University attracted scholars from the different parts of the country as well as world. The Chinese scholar's I-Qing and Xuan Zang visited Nalanda in the 7th century CE. They have given vivid accounts of Nalanda. They have noted that as many as one hundred discourses happened on a daily basis, in a variety of disciplines through the methods of debate and discussions. Xuan Zang himself became a student of Nalanda to study *yogashastra*.

iii) System of Education: Medieval Period

With the advent of Islam in Indian subcontinent, a number of schools and libraries were opened but the same were largely ignored because of the foreign language of the books and medium of teaching. Long before fierce wars, invasions and other form of power struggles as per the then world order, Arabs and the Turks brought new cultures, traditions, and institutions in India through trade ties and in that the most remarkable change was the Islamic pattern of education which was different from the Buddhist and Brahmanic education system. Later when Muslim emperors established stable empires in the subcontinent; they brought a new system of education with great zeal. *Maktabs* which means elementary schools and *Madarsa* - an equivalent of modern day college were the education institutions where knowledge of *deen* (religion) and *duniya* (world) was imparted, distinct from *masjids* or *masajids* which were places of gathering for no other purpose except for worship. In the medieval age, education system primarily focused on the basic as well as advanced Islamic education such as various Islamic texts including work of scholars compiled as Islamic Jurisprudence and basic education of knowledge pertinent for the contemporary society such as language of the court, mathematics, medicine, healing techniques, alchemy etc. With passage of time, accumulation of wealth in royal treasure and political stability, reforms were introduced in the syllabi of these schools and colleges for the good of the citizens. Everybody ought to read books on philosophy, literature, arts, morals, arithmetic, the notation peculiar to

arithmetic, mathematics, geography, agriculture, mensuration, geometry, astronomy, physiognomy, households matters, rules of government, medicine, logic science and history, all of which may be gradually acquired. The main objective of education during the medieval period was the spread of knowledge and the propagation of Islam as well as training of the coming generations as polished citizens who could help in empire building by performing different roles as per their capabilities. During those days, books were rare commodity and expensive, therefore the students used to share books and write on taktis. There was no examination system either. Students were promoted from a lower to higher class according to the opinion of the teacher concerned who took into account the total academic career of the students whom they observed during daily classes and weekly oral tests. Three types of degrees, viz. Fazil, Alim and Kabil, were awarded to the students on the basis of their performances. Fazil means one with an outstanding, eminent student of knowledge and in today's time, this same degree is awarded to a student who has obtained a post-graduate degree of Board. Aalim (Arabic: عالم; plural: Ulama) in its original meaning is known as a scholar and he is regarded as the one who protects and explains religious knowledge and today it is regarded as a certificate of senior secondary level examination of the Board. Kabil means one who is able and in today's time a degree of kamil means under graduate degree of the Board. Agra, Delhi Fatehpur Sikri, Ambala, Lucknow, Gwalior, Allahabad, Kashmir, Sialkot, Lahore and Jaunpur were the centers of Muslim education and Persian language was the medium of instruction as the same was also the language of court and other offices. Even though the medieval Government did not have any regular Department of Public Instructions it could justly boast of possessing one (Department of Public Instructions) which looked after religious as well as educational institutions. It was perhaps only during the days of acute unrest occasioned by external invasions or internal disorders that the sacred cause of education suffered to a certain extent. Barring out a few such cases, however, education made mighty strides during the medieval period, so much so in fact that Muslim Universities of Medieval India were thronged by thousands of students and professors and often hundreds of hearers.

By the time of Akbar's reign, education was liberalised and even non-muslims were admitted to Mukhtabs and Madrasas, As a result, in course of time certain Hindu scholars and historians learnt Persian and made valuable contribution to the cause of education. Some of the prominent scholars of the time were Madho Bhat, Shri Bhat, Bishan Nath, Ram Krishan, Balbhadra Misr, Vasudeva Misr, Bhan Bhat, Vidya Nivas, Gauri Nath, Gopi Nath, Kishan Pandit, Bhattacharji, Bhagirath, Kashi Nath,

Mahadeo, Bhim Nath and Narain Sivji. So, a new type of institution emerged distinct from the ancient education system. But the ancient system of education was neither influenced nor did it come to an end. It rather became an alternative, a choice. During the Medieval period, Banaras, Mathura, Allahabad, Nadiad, Ayodhya, Srinagar and Mithila were prominent centres for the education of the Hindus. Most of the students received their education at their dwellings. Theology, geography, medicine, grammar and mathematics were popular subjects. Bernier and Tavernier have praised Banaras as a centre of education. In the beginning, the children were sent to the Pathshalas at the age of five which were attached to the temples and after completing their primary education, they were admitted to the Vidyapith for higher education.

There were no separate educational institutions for girls. They had to go to the boys' schools if they at all wished to get education. The fashion was that girls did get education at Madarsa till they reach a certain age, then after the teacher would arrange separate classes for girls and boys. The wealthy and nobles would get their daughters education through privately hired teachers who would train them in various forms of arts and teach them skills while princesses were trained by matrons. Scientific and technological researches were mostly absent in Indian subcontinent as against the universities in the contemporary Islamic empires. The system of education in vogue in medieval India lacked resilience and had become much too rigid and non-creative. The modifications made in it from time to time did not go far enough to meet the challenge of the times it was called upon to face. After all, one of the main functions of knowledge is to cultivate the faculty to apprehend relations found in social and natural phenomena, so that one may be able to orient oneself in time and place which is a sign of intellectual development. Without this faculty no group can survive. The chief failing of the medieval system of education was that it was not found adequate to enable its adherents to form habits of accurate observation and practical judgement. It was much too rigid, sterile and bookish. The chief factor in assessing all educational activity should be whether it calls forth the best of the potentialities for moral and spiritual growth. It would be historically true to assert that the medieval system of education, especially in the later Mughal period, failed to impart the qualities of leadership and thus ensure the supply of outstanding personalities in the different walks of life.

iv) System of Education: Modern Period

Modern education began in India under British rule. Before the British, India had its own educational systems like the Gurukul and the Madrasas. The East India Company, during their first 60 years of rule didn't care much for the education of those they

ruled in India. Even in England, universal education came about at a much later stage. Three agents of modern education in India were: The British Government (East India Company), Christian missionaries, Indian intellectuals and reformers. The development of modern education took place in bits and pieces, step by step and there were reasons for the same. The company wanted some educated Indians who could assist them in the administration of the land. Also, they wanted to understand the local customs and laws well. For this purpose, Warren Hastings established the Calcutta Madrasa in 1781 for the teaching of Muslim law. In 1791, a Sanskrit College was started in Varanasi by Jonathan Duncan for the study of Hindu philosophy and laws.

The missionaries supported the spread of Western education in India primarily for their proselytising activities. They established many schools with education only being a means to an end which was Christianising and 'civilising' the natives. The Baptist missionary William Carey had come to India in 1793 and by 1800 there was a Baptist Mission in Serampore, Bengal, and also a number of primary schools there and in nearby areas. The Indian reformers believed that to keep up with times, a modern educational system was needed to spread rational thinking and scientific principles.

The Charter Act of 1813 was the first step towards education being made an objective of the government. The act sanctioned a sum of Rs.1 lakh towards the education of Indians in British ruled India. This act also gave an impetus to the missionaries who were given official permission to come to India. But there was a split in the government over what kind of education was to be offered to the Indians. The orientalists preferred Indians to be given traditional Indian education. Some others, however, wanted Indians to be educated in the western style of education and be taught western subjects. There was also another difficulty regarding the language of instruction. Some wanted the use of Indian languages (called vernaculars) while others preferred English. Due to these issues, the sum of money allotted was not given until 1823 when the General Committee of Public Instruction decided to impart oriental education. In 1835, it was decided that western sciences and literature would be imparted to Indians through the medium of English by Lord William Bentinck's government. Bentinck had appointed Thomas Babington Macaulay as the Chairman of the General Committee of Public Instruction. Macaulay was an ardent Anglicist who had absolute contempt for Indian learning of any kind. He was supported by Reverend Alexander Duff, JR Colvin, etc. On the side of the orientalists were James Prinsep, Henry Thomas Colebrooke, etc.

Macaulay minutes refer to his proposal of education for the Indians. According to him, English education should be imparted in place of traditional Indian learning because the oriental culture was 'defective' and 'unholy'. He believed in education a few upper and middle-class students. In the course of time, education would trickle down to the masses. This was called the infiltration theory. He wished to create a class of Indians who were Indian in colour and appearance but English in taste and affiliation. In 1835, the Elphinstone College (Bombay) and the Calcutta Medical College were established.

Wood's Despatch (1854)

Sir Charles Wood was the President of the Board of Control of the company in 1854 when he sent a despatch to the then Governor-General of India, Lord Dalhousie. This is called the 'Magna Carta of English education in India'. Recommendations of the Wood's Dispatch Regularized education system from the primary to the university levels. Indians were to be educated in English and their native language. The education system was to be set up in every province. Every district should have at least one government school. Affiliated private schools could be granted aids. Education of women should be emphasized. Universities of Madras, Calcutta and Bombay were set up by 1857. University of Punjab - 1882; University of Allahabad - 1887. This dispatch asked the government to take up the responsibility of education of the people.

Assessment of the British Efforts on Education

Although there were a few Englishmen who wanted to spread education for its own sake, the government was chiefly concerned only with its own concerns. There was a huge demand for clerks and other administrative roles in the company's functioning. It was cheaper to get Indians rather than Englishmen from England for these jobs. This was the prime motive. No doubt it spread western education among Indians, but the rate of literacy was abysmally low during British rule. The state of women education was pathetic. This was because the government did not want to displease the orthodox nature of Indians and also because women could not generally be employed as clerks. In 1911, the illiteracy rate in British India was 94%. In 1921, it was 92%. Scientific and technical education was ignored by the British government.

As time passed education started to develop and entered into the modern era that is in the twenty-first century, the era of science, technology, and innovations. And the demand and the need for education stills remain the same as it was in ancient and medieval times. In the modern era of science and technology, the industrial sector is increasing day by day. As demand increases our education sector also needs to change and adapt to that environment.

v) Transformation from Tree Classroom to Online Classroom

Remember the days of gurukul? Yes, the days, where the nature was the school and the peepal trees used to be the classrooms. The traditional schooling has since undergone a sea change. Now that 'peepal tree' has become huge buildings, with massive infrastructures. But this is not the case with all the schools around the country. There are still schools which lack basic amenities and infrastructure of a classroom. But nonetheless, there have been a transformation which all of us have witnessed in the last few decades. The huge peepal tree stretching its wide branches and pupils sitting underneath the shade of this tree was the best environment a child could study in. There was no distraction or pollution, nor was it difficult to sit and study then. It was so basic then and yet amazingly efficient. But with changing times, needs of children, parents, teachers and educational institutions have changed variedly and significantly. The need of the hour demands an infrastructure which is digitally well equipped so that the teaching could be impactful. With changing lifestyles and stressful culture, we need to provide young minds with facilities where learning can take place in the most efficient manner.

The student-teacher relations remained the same as it was in ancient and medieval, but students did not live in the teacher's house. The 21st century has brought about a massive change in the world of education. Gone are those days when teaching was limited only within the confines of a classroom. The internet has brought about a paradigm shift in the fundamental way in which learning is done. It has taken learning beyond the hallowed walls of the universities and into the palms of everyone. But how did this radical transformation occur? The education sector is also following the trend of technology by teaching the students through online lectures and Massive Open Online Course (MOOC) Women's education is giving more importance, and the Government has launched many programs to encourage women's education. In the modern era electronics gadgets like projectors, Light Emitting Diode (LED), and computers are used to teach the students.

vi) Origin of Online Classes

The concept of online classes in the world traced back in the year 1960, at the University of Illinois, USA. Though the internet wasn't invented back then, students began learning from computer terminals that were interlinked to form a network. The first-ever completely online course was offered in 1984 by the University of Toronto. In 1986, the Electronic University Network was established for being used in DOS and Commodore 64 computers. Three years later, the University of Phoenix became the first educational institution in the world to launch a wholly online collegiate institution,

offering both bachelor and master's degrees. This was the beginning of a revolution whose potential was largely unknown to the public back then, but one that would make learning greatly accessible and within reach of what people could ever have imagined.

vii) Effect of Pandemic on Education System

Since its outbreak two years ago, the COVID-19 pandemic has disrupted education systems globally, affecting the most vulnerable learners the hardest. It has increased inequalities and exacerbated a pre-existing education crisis. School closures have ranged from no closures in a handful of countries to up to more than a full school year. Lack of connectivity and devices excluded at least one third of students from pursuing learning remotely.

Today, despite multiple variants, schools are open in the majority of countries, supported by health and safety protocols and vaccination programmes. But the costs stand to be tremendous in terms of learning losses, health and well-being and drop-out. Prioritizing education as a public good is crucial to avoid a generational catastrophe and drive a sustainable recovery. To be more resilient, equitable and inclusive, education systems must transform, leveraging technology to benefit all learners and building on the innovations and partnerships catalyzed throughout this crisis (UNESCO [19]).

The pandemic caused further shocks to the system with schools forced to shut down during the lockdown period, and the transition of students and teachers to online teaching-learning. In India, around 250 million students were affected due to school closures at the onset of lockdown induced by COVID-19. The schools and institution adopted the idea of E-education and the teachers worked tirelessly to ensure their students continue their studies without disruption. Despite the challenges faced by everyone, but the mentor's hard work made sure online learning platforms provided a way to keep students engaged and excited to study. The virtual learning platforms are good for both teachers and students as it ensured the safe environment. The academic institution adopted a various web platforms for studies:

1. **Zoom-** It became the 1st choice for meetings and webinars for its ease and functionality. Why not use this video conferencing tool for online classes too? It provided a secure learning environment for kids, but it allows for safe interactions between students and teachers.
2. **Microsoft Teams-** Classrooms are a true team environment when teachers and students can swap thoughts and ideas. It makes easy for both teachers and students to work together as they can exchange

videos, homework assignments and engaged in chat conversations.

Already, educational procedures globally have transformed to integrate different applications of AI. With learning material accessible through smartphones and tabs students now don't have to rely on conventional books. Meanwhile, online institutes are emerging throughout the globe, creating whole new opportunities for people to learn without leaving their homes. It benefits the both teacher and student in such a way as follows:

1. **Proctor Based Examination and Grading:**
With the University Grant Commission allowing higher education institutes to conduct exams online and in innovative ways, the take-home exams can be a huge relief for academicians but the major concern remains one of ensuring integrity. An AI-assisted proctor is software that is often powered by artificial intelligence (AI), which keeps an eye on a candidate. It can note a change in voice, implying a whisper on a phone or even detect a person sitting next to the examinee. Teachers in modern academic settings spend a great bit of their time in administrative duties such as grading the students. However, technology can help in automating this task, leaving teachers with more time to spend on educating their pupils. Moving forward, software that can grade written answers and essays will also be implemented in educational institutions.
2. **Geographical Barriers:**
Online courses have made it possible for students from any region to join a course from any other country. The physical barriers between countries have been eliminated in terms of online education. Technology made it possible to acquire specialized skills from the best teachers, no matter where they are located. Now, students have even better chances of updating their skills through AI-powered training sessions. Information Technology is one area where numerous courses are using AI. That shouldn't be surprising since artificial intelligence is an inherent part of the industry. Students and professionals who wish to become AI and ML experts are enrolling for these courses.
3. **Education Made Easy for People with Special Needs:**
It has always been a challenging task to create a learning program for people with special needs. Though there are exclusive schools for students with hearing, speech, and visual impairment, the teaching

process could have been more effective. Also, students with ADHD, dyslexia, autism, etc., have to be enrolled in special schools to help them deal better. But why can't these students continue to be a part of regular schools? Is there a way teachers can understand and pay more attention to these kids? Artificial intelligence is making it possible for kids with special needs to study most comfortably. SpeakIt, Widex's Evoke, and Empower Me are a few examples of AI in education that cater exclusively to kids with special needs.

4. **Providing 24*7 Access to Learning and Study Material:**
Wouldn't it be wonderful if a student can study anytime he/she wants to? We aren't talking about studying at home with the books a student owns. Several teachers would have gotten calls from students asking for references or study materials even in the middle of the night. What if students can directly access the online library and download the material? What if students can rely on AI-powered sessions to learn a difficult concept instead of troubling the faculty at odd times?
5. **Creating a Virtual Learning Environment:**
An AI business consultant can create a virtual learning environment where students can clear their doubts by asking the chat box and virtual assistants instead of contacting the teacher. If a student feels susceptible to get their doubts cleared by the teacher, they can take the assistance of technology. There is no need to feel demotivated or give up on the subject because of these reasons.

The topics that students don't understand at school or cannot be properly explained by parents are better handled by artificial intelligence. The same virtual environment can be used to conduct online exams as well.

There are already various such test tools for recruitment. The same is implemented in the educational sector as well. AI services can be used to build a secure online examination tool that allows the teachers to create and customize test forms.

The students can attempt the tests from their existing locations at any time they choose. These tests are evaluated by the system rather than by the teachers. The teachers can, of course, track the entire process.

6. Digital Collaboration:

In online classes, teachers, students and parents should work together to reach the final goal. It is necessary for the effectiveness of online classes. Digital Collaboration means working together with other classmates to reach the final goal. In this, students share ideas and work in small pairs. It allows pupils to work on their communication and listening skills. It helps students to understand the importance of teamwork and togetherness.

vii) Challenges in Remote Classes

The spread of Covid-19 struck us without warning and left educational institutions scrambling to respond to its emergencies. We have enlisted major online learning challenges:

1. Boredom, Lack of Discipline:

In this highly digitalized era, online learning is meant to provide a solution to the boredom of classroom-based learning. However, this is not always the case. Several E-learning courses consist of never-ending text or have a lot of MCQ that fail to engage students. With the courses like these, students often get bored, and this lack of engagement.

2. Technical Glitches:

Not every student has tech-savvy or access to high-bandwidth or strong internet connection that online class requires, this leads to the difficulty and challenge faced by both while taking the remote classes.

3. Gadgets Shortage:

Not every student and teacher has a personal gadget to use. Many of them share their laptops, mobile devices and computers with their parents or siblings to keep up with their remote work.

4. Security Issues

From the beginning of the pandemic, online platforms have been a fertile ground of cyber crime. Many institutions, teachers and students have fallen prey to these crimes. For instance, in recent past, it was reported that Zoom, a remote conference service company stores all video conference recordings on storage space without a password; also institutions had been a victim of zoom bombing during a class.

5. No Practical Knowledge:

The more you practice, better you learn. But in online learning, there are some limitations, not every subject can be mastered. For instance, if we talk about our field i.e. law, it requires a practical exposure as well along with academics.

viii) International Collaborations and NEP, 2020

The Global Learning Initiatives Program is an online learning programme that was launched by National

Taiwan University in April 2020 among the Association of East Asian Research Universities (AEARU). AEARU is an international network with 19 members from Japan, South Korea, Hong Kong, mainland China and Taiwan.

As the development of information technology has made life easier in many ways and e-learning has become more and more pervasive around the world due to the current global situation, it became essential for members to integrate their resources to build up an inter-campus online course network. The variety of member universities means that not only can students acquire knowledge from different professors and perspectives, but collaborations between faculty and students at different member universities can be initiated. The programme aims to incorporate the resources of multiple leading universities to provide unique international learning experiences with different cross-cultural perspectives from students in different locations and regions.

The first pilot round was launched in spring 2021. In this round, there are 90 participating students and 33 faculty members from eight universities. Twenty-one themed courses were provided in the pilot round, including those related to STEM (science, technology, engineering and mathematics) and the Sustainable Development Goals, law, research methodology and the social sciences. The programme allows students to supplement their learning portfolio and take advantage of the ability to interact with students and teachers from other universities and countries.

The Indian higher education sector is abuzz after the Union Cabinet approved the New Education Policy (NEP), 2020. National Education Policy 2020 is the first education policy of the 21st century and aims to address the many growing developmental imperatives of our country. This policy envisages that the extant 10+2 structure in school education will be modified with a new pedagogical and curricular restructuring of 5+3+3+4 covering ages 3-18. Currently, children in the age group of 3-6 are not covered in the 10+2 structure as Class 1 begins at age 6. In the new 5+3+3+4 structure, a strong base of Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) from age 3 is also included, which is aimed at promoting better overall learning, development, and well-being. ECCE ideally consists of flexible, multi-faceted, multi-level, play-based, activity-based, and inquiry-based learning, comprising of alphabets, languages, numbers, counting, colours, shapes, indoor and outdoor play, puzzles and logical thinking, problem-solving, drawing, painting and other visual art, craft, drama and puppetry, music and movement. It also includes a focus on developing social capacities, sensitivity, good behaviour, courtesy, ethics, personal and public

cleanliness, teamwork, and cooperation. The overall aim of ECCE will be to attain optimal outcomes in the domains of: physical and motor development, cognitive development, socio-emotional-ethical development, cultural/artistic development, and the development of communication and early language, literacy, and numeracy. This Policy proposes the revision and revamping of all aspects of the education structure, including its regulation and governance, to create a new system that is aligned with the inspirational goals of 21st century education, including SDG4, while building upon India's traditions and value systems. Paving the way for foreign universities to set up campuses in the country is one of the major announcements made in the policy. In recent times, transnational, cross-border, offshore, and borderless higher education have become trendy terms—particularly from the year 2000 onwards when the phenomenon of mobility in higher education took shape and moved from people (students, faculty, scholars) to programme (twinning, franchise, virtual) to provider (branch campus) mobility, and most recently, to the concerted development of education hubs. The new NEP says, “A legislative framework facilitating such entry (of foreign universities) will be put in place, and such universities will be given special dispensation regarding regulatory, governance, and content norms on par with other autonomous institutions of India.”

With this new policy reform, many are riding on a wave of optimism that now it would be possible to get quality education as global universities will establish their branch campuses in India. On the other hand, some believe that this will increase inequality by increasing the cost of education and will create challenges for local institutes as foreign providers will take unfair advantage of the market. Another factor among reliable drivers for opening foreign universities in India is the lack of quality education accessible in the country. India's higher education sector has provided some of the world's best talent, and over the years IITs, IISc, IIMs have become a brand name. Yet, the overall inferior perception of Indian higher education, including the poor quality of infrastructure, is a significant problem. The unmet needs for world-quality education are reflected by the latest release of the QS World University Rankings, in which the number of Indian institutes in the top 1,000 dropped from 25 in 2019 to 21 this year, and only three Indian institutes made it to the top 200. High cut-offs and competitive entrance tests for admission, shortage of innovative courses, poor infrastructure are some of the reasons even the brightest Indian students give up on their hopes of securing admission in reputed Indian institutes. This flight of quality students abroad is a serious concern as sending our students overseas means that we are importing the service of education.

Conclusion

Education, a first generation Human Right, is fundamental for achieving full human potential, developing an equitable and just society, and promoting national development. Providing universal access to quality education is the key to India's continued ascent, and leadership on the global stage in terms of economic growth, social justice and equality, scientific advancement, national integration, and cultural preservation. Universal high-quality education is the best way forward for developing and maximizing our country's rich talents and resources for the good of the individual, the society, the country, and the world. The world is undergoing rapid changes in the knowledge landscape. With various dramatic scientific and technological advances, such as the rise of big data, machine learning, and artificial intelligence, many unskilled jobs worldwide may be taken over by machines, while the need for a skilled workforce, particularly involving mathematics, computer science, and data science, in conjunction with multidisciplinary abilities across the sciences, social sciences, and humanities, will be increasingly in greater demand. With climate change, increasing pollution, and depleting natural resources, there will be a sizeable shift in how we meet the world's energy, water, food, and sanitation needs, again resulting in the need for new skilled labour, particularly in biology, chemistry, physics, agriculture, climate science, and social science. The growing emergence of epidemics and pandemics will also call for collaborative research in infectious disease management and development of vaccines and the resultant social issues heightens the need for multidisciplinary learning. There will be a growing demand for humanities and art, as India moves towards becoming a developed country as well as among the three largest economies in the world. The aim of education in ancient India was not just the acquisition of knowledge as preparation for life in this world, or life beyond schooling, but for the complete realization and liberation of the self. World-class institutions of ancient India such as Takshashila, Nalanda, Vikramshila, Vallabhi, set the highest standards of multidisciplinary teaching and research and hosted scholars and students from across backgrounds and countries. The Indian education system produced great scholars such as Charaka, Susruta, Aryabhata, Varahamihira, Bhaskaracharya, Brahmagupta, Chanakya, Chakrapani Datta, Madhava, Panini, Patanjali, Nagarjuna, Gautama, Pingala, Sankardev, Maitreyi, Gargi and Thiruvalluvar, among numerous others, who made seminal contributions to world knowledge in diverse fields such as mathematics, astronomy, metallurgy, medical science and surgery, civil engineering, architecture, shipbuilding and navigation, yoga, fine arts, chess, and more. Indian culture and philosophy have had a strong influence on the world. These rich legacies to world

heritage must not only be nurtured and preserved for posterity but also researched, enhanced, and put to new uses through our education system. But the concept of international collaboration generates multiple advantages resulting in enhanced quality education. The impact will be seen in areas of research and development, faculty and student exchange facilitation, dual degree and certification programs, training and development, exposure to global business strategies, multiple social and cultural identities, thus, creating global citizen leaders and a future employable generation.

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