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Editorial

This issue brings to the state-of-Art as well as major challenges in the field of education. In their article,

Dr. Ceena Paul and Sujit R. Chandak argue that Education Technology (ET) can enhance the teaching-learning process. Pedagogical practices in many disciplines have made space for various technologies in the classroom, but improvement in the existing condition in the govt. aided institutions. and motivational level among teachers in using technology are very important for effective use of the ET.

Ms. Celin Thomas, in her article explores the evolution of human rights in terms of its documentation, its impact during the course of human history and the need, relevance and practical application of human rights education within the Indian context.

Conceptual paper by Dr. Radhika Khanna provides developing advocacy skills for parents of intellectually disabled young adults through the “Santoolan Model” based on the ethos of ‘inclusive development’ as the right path towards sustainable development, focused initiatives for the welfare of persons with special needs are of utmost need.

“The Problems of Indian Higher Education” by Dr. Ruby Ojha and Ms. Shobha Tawde argues that India holds an important place in the global education industry with one of the largest networks of higher education institutions in the world, but the already existing challenges for Indian higher education – access, equity and quality will only deteriorate unless we significantly transform our higher education model.

We request authors to send their original research-based articles and book reviews on issues concerning education. As Quest in Education publishes peer-reviewed articles, the authors should be ready to wait for seeing their article in print.

Vibhuti Patel

Sonal Shukla

Ratnabrabha Rajmane

Adapting to Educational Technology in the Traditional U G Classroom: A Pilot Study to improve ICT usage in an Undergraduate College

Dr. Ceena Paul & Sujit R. Chandak

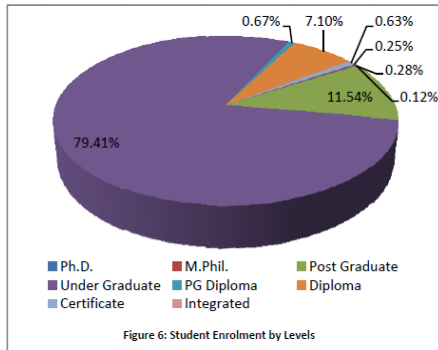
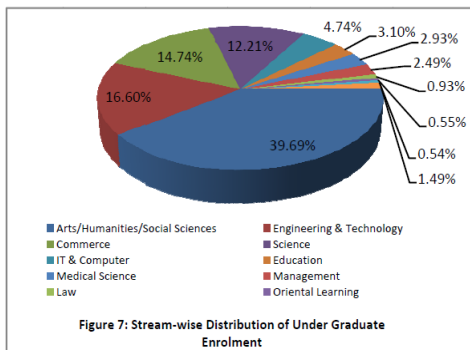
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Abstract

In recent times it has come to be widely accepted that Education Technology can enhance the teaching-learning process. Pedagogical practices in many disciplines have made space for various technologies in the classroom. Though there is a lot of focus on using technology in the classroom, it is a fact that a large percentage of classrooms, teaching the traditional Under Graduate (U G) courses in India do not use technology. The major reasons for traditional U G courses to lag behind in usage are those of lack of training and motivation among teachers, unavailability of equipped classroom and dearth of suitable and good quality e-content. The first part of this paper would argue that these reasons germinate from the single source of not having enthusiasm towards using various classroom technologies.

The second part would look at the existing condition in the govt. aided institutions. It will first look at the question of motivational level among teachers in using technology. This will be achieved by conducting a survey of teachers and identifying the factors which act as a hurdle. Secondly, the paper would illustrate with a limited action research the gains that accrue when one teaches using various educational technologies. This classroom pedagogical research will be conducted on two divisions of a course one teaching with the help of various educational technologies and the other without it. At the end of this activity a MCQ test will be taken with the aim of testing conceptual clarity, and ability of reproducing facts. The data generated from this pilot study, regarding the ability of enhancing learner's experience with the usage of classroom educational technologies, could be put up as a case study to strengthen the proposal for making all classrooms ICT enabled. Thirdly, it would look at the problems faced in locating suitable E content for the average plain vanilla U G courses classroom.

Technology is the application of scientific knowledge for practical, everyday life purposes; education technology is all about harnessing the power of scientific knowledge and technology used in various fields, and applying them to the teaching-learning process. Education technology is defined in various ways. Bates and Poole propose a very simple definition: “Education technology encompasses any means of communicating with learners other than through direct, face-to-face, or personal contact.”⁽¹⁾ In other words anything apart from the teacher personally connecting and interacting with the students is educational technology. There has been, a large number of adaptations of technologies from various fields into education in our age of internet, and the I C T revolution. Almost all educational technologies, including the ubiquitous OHP and Power Point, were not specially made for use in the education sector; they were adapted into the field of education. It is not easy to adapt technology into education successfully and in a cost effective manner. However, with the coming of web2.0 and the social character of internet accessibility as well as cost effectiveness of technologies to be integrated into the classroom has increased greatly. Sharing of content, classroom approach and strategies, ideas, innovations, and techniques across geographies has become possible with various media sharing websites, wikis, networking websites, online forums, blogs etc.



In the last decade there has been a big push and lot of talk at the governmental policy level about the use of education technology in Higher education in India. A perception is created that it can be the panacea for all the problems facing us in Higher Education. There have been various training programmes, workshops and courses to increase

the awareness of teachers to use technology in the classroom; methodological changes have been incorporated in various disciplines so as to make space for technology in the teaching-learning process; similarly, an effort has been there to equip the classrooms with the necessary infrastructure. Higher education in India has a wide-ranging diversity of courses, institutions and students: Central Universities, State Universities, Deemed Universities, Open Universities, Institutions of importance, standalone institutions, affiliated / conducted colleges of Universities, and autonomous colleges. The All India Survey of Higher Education 2014 (henceforth AISHE) ⁽²⁾ pegs the number as: There are 642 Universities, 34852 colleges 11126 Stand Alone Institutions 88 Technical, 50 Agriculture & Allied, 29 Medical and 18 Law Universities. Gross Enrolment Ratio (GER) in Higher education in India is 20.8, which is calculated for 18-23 years of age group; while Total enrolment in higher education has been estimated to be 29.2 million. Of this about 80% students are enrolled in Undergraduate courses. Out of all the Undergraduate level students 69% are enrolled in traditional courses of B. A., B. Com., and B. Sc. B.A. ranks first followed by Engineering courses of B.E./B. Tech., B.com. and B. Sc. Courses respectively.

Both the researchers writing this paper work at U G level and are engaged in teaching the traditional B.A. & B. Com courses. In their understanding and discussion with other colleagues in the colleges of their university as well as other universities they realize that the situations of classroom and the context of teaching-learning process in such colleges, offering traditional U G courses, is more or less similar. Technology usage in such courses can be described as minimal, PPT centric and occasional, although there may be a lot of stress being put on usage of technology in the classroom. The prioritizing of technology usage is being pushed for by various initiatives including those by the mandatory quality accreditation that is being done via the NAAC. However, the roadblocks in increasing efficient technology usage, which can result in enhanced goal achievement and provide a better experience for students, are many including those of attitude, approach, lack of innovation, motivation, enthusiasm and infrastructure. In between the stress to use technology, recording its usage and providing data as proof to the accreditation process and the lack of using it due to

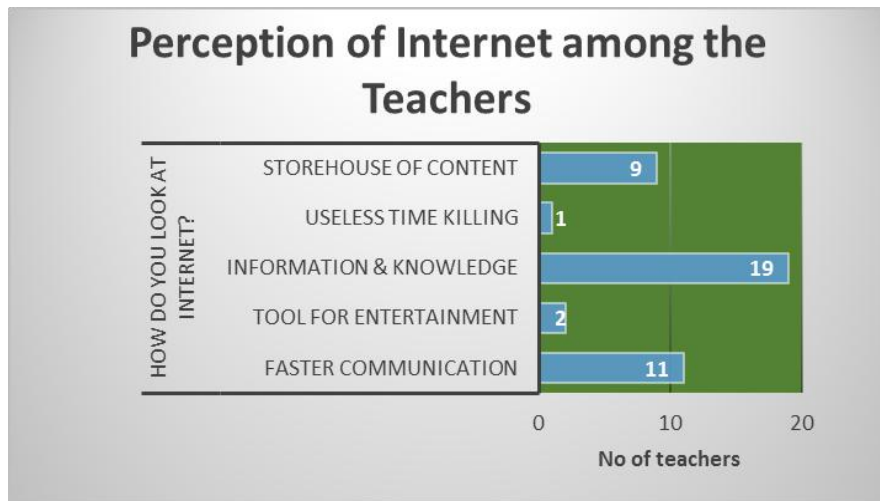
the above-mentioned roadblocks what tends to happen is that only a lip service is offered to using technology. This results in a lot of brouhaha about education technology without much usage and substance. We are not thinking about technology usage in education, it is being done in a top to down model; we are ordered to and so we use education technology. Such an approach is mandatory in nature and if there are no incentives to motivate teachers in actually using the technology, despite having provision of infrastructure for it by the Governmental agencies, there is a lack of utilization. There are studies conducted by the UNESCO which have made similar observations. ⁽³⁾ We have not asked basic question as to where and how to introduce technology into our lesson plans for various subjects. Which topics could benefit from what type of education technology? What is it that education technologies are going to change? Technology has to be integrated into the pedagogical practices of various discipline and the syllabi design accordingly has to anticipate the benefits of using various technology in the classroom. Moreover, we must also ask why we are not using it on a regular basis. These questions when deliberated upon by the teaching community will result in effective and real usage of technology in the classroom.

Our argument in this paper is that behind this lack of usage of education technology there may be several reasons, but they all germinate from lack of an enthusiasm amongst teachers in colleges offering traditional U G courses. After probing the general situation in the higher education an attempt was made to understand the scenario closer at home as regards the usage of technology. Our home institute is an Undergraduate College in suburban Mumbai. It is aided college (receives salary and other grants from the State Government). This college like others imparts education in regional language apart from the English language. The below section probes in detail the results of the survey conducted to study– a) the awareness of the various ICT tools amongst the faculty of the above-mentioned college and b) to ascertain the problems in using ICT in the classroom.

Survey results

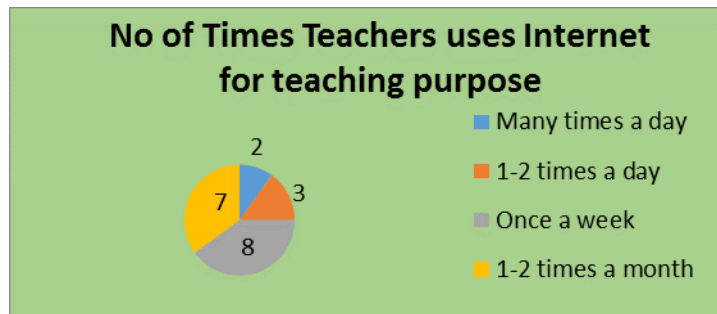
With the objective to study the attitude, awareness and usage of ICT in the classroom teaching a pilot study was conducted among the teachers of said institute. Our sample constituted of 50% of the aided college faculty. The respondents were randomly selected with only condition being that not more than 50% of the staff of every academic department was included. The survey result when analyzed mainly showed the following points:

- Response to the questions which sought to gauge the perception of and attitude towards internet made it clear that teachers look at internet as a source of information, knowledge and educational content. Only one teacher thought it was a useless waste of time and as tool of entertainment. Hence, it can be said that teachers are aware that internet can be of great use in the teaching-learning practice of their classes.

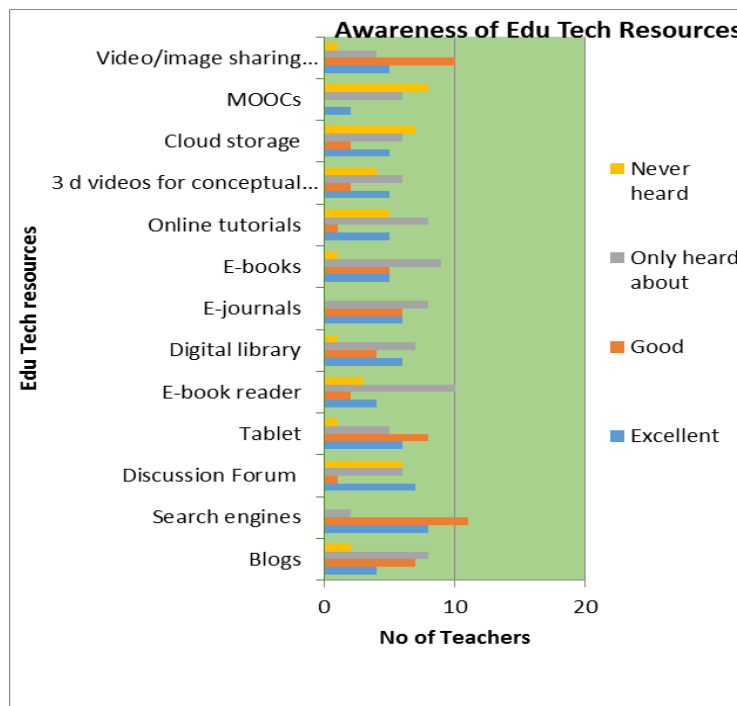


- Although teachers think of internet largely as having positive capabilities, when asked about the number of times they checked the internet for teaching purpose, the results showed that only 25% used it on a daily basis; whereas 40% used it once a week and 35% used it 1-2 times in a month. This is a pointer that although a large number of teachers have the awareness about the usage of internet

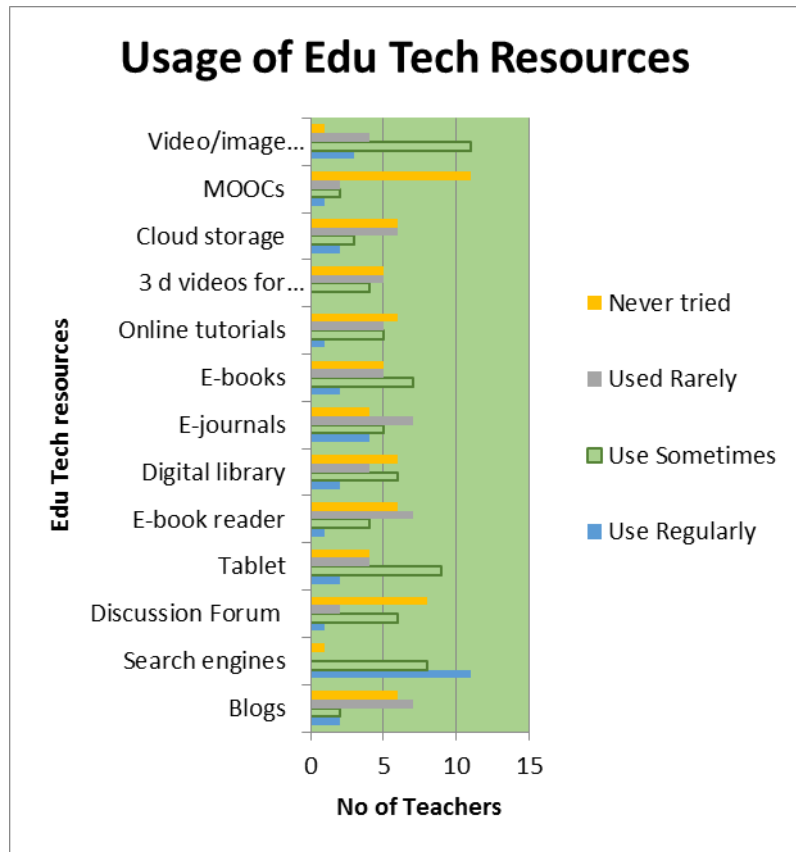
and also believe that it is an important source of information and knowledge on a variety of topics, when it comes to using it for their teaching many of them do not use it regularly; using it rarely most probably when the traditional resources are not yielding the answers or it is easy to get it on internet.



- Among other questions our survey tried to figure out the ‘Usage’ in teaching and ‘awareness’ of various technological resources. Awareness and actual usage in teaching of 13 educational technology related items were measured. Other than MOOCs, Online tutorials, discussion forums and cloud storage the awareness amongst teachers regarding different technology tools was high. Highest awareness was of search engine, media sharing websites and apps, blogs and e-journals respectively. Awareness of these tools was compared by asking about the usage of these resources by teachers for classroom purpose.

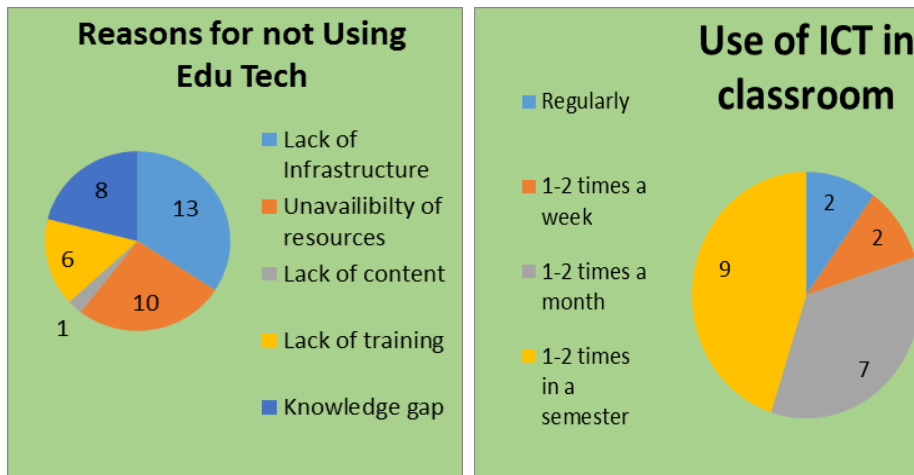


- When the knowledge of various education technology resources is compared with their usage by teachers in regular teaching it is evident that there is a gap between the awareness and the usage of various resources. It is clear that it is not a gap of awareness or knowledge; teachers know more about the various resources but when it comes to the real usage of these resources, for the purpose of teaching, they lack in it.



- When teachers were asked the reasons why technology was not used/ less used in their classroom, the largest blame was on the infrastructure followed by unavailability of resources. Knowledge gap and inability to locate content was identified as the least of the problems. Even though the faculty has expressed that infrastructure and lack of resources are the prime cause for the poor usage of

technology it cannot be considered as totally correct as a continuous attempt is being made by the authorities to upgrade the availability of ICT infrastructure within the campus. In the last two years eight regular classrooms have been equipped with a projector and audio capabilities apart from the audio-visual room in addition 3 laptops and 2 projectors are also made available. But their usage compared to the staff and the number of lectures in those rooms is abysmal. Also on probing how many times the teachers have used ICT in their classrooms, the largest group was one which used it 1-2 times in a semester (45%) followed by 1-2 times in a month (35%). Those who used it regularly and 1-2 times a week were 10% each. Thus to blame on the lack of infrastructure and the unavailability of resources primarily as a reason for poor usage of ICT in the class environment does not seem to be quiet correct.



After having the resources in some of the classroom if teachers are not using it, the reasons for this has to be probed from the point of view of enthusiasm level as also of the lack of incentives, both accrued and anticipated, to use educational technology into their classrooms. This survey established that teachers in the said institute have a positive view towards technology as also good level of awareness and knowledge about it, however when it comes to using it in the classroom they severely lacked. On the brighter side, it was also noticed that there

were some teachers who were combining their knowledge of resources with the available infrastructure and using it on a regular basis.

Indeed, the conclusion can be derived from the survey that lack of enthusiasm is one of the major stumbling blocks in the usage of technology among the teaching faculty but along with this one factor which cannot be brushed aside is the poor infrastructural facility which is available in the college. Yes, indeed the management has taken steps to improve the availability of technology in the campus but still there is a long way to go. To impress upon the management and the other stakeholder i.e. teaching faculty that a greater usage of ICT can have a positive result on the academic performance of the students. A pilot study was conducted among the students to understand the relation between the usage of ICT and academic performance. The next section deals with the result of the student's pilot study.

Survey results

One of the issues which confront the faculties of the Degree College is the apathy shown by students towards the teaching-learning process. The problems confronted by the Economics teachers are acute as the students find the subject matter theoretical and complicated; abstract concepts are difficult to imagine as students do not have practical experience of things. To make teaching, learning and evaluation method in general and particularly in making learning economics more interesting and students centric, in the past few decades there has been a growing recognition of the potential value of technology driven teaching. Various studies have reviewed the relation between the usage of educational technology and teaching and learning methods as well on students' performance and they have concluded that a positive correlation is noted among the variables. Similarly, there are research studies which have pointed that in economics education, educational technology facilitates the acquisition of important cognitive skills required for effective economic analysis and evaluation. For example, studies undertaken by Schrage, 1986[iv] and Smith and Smith, 1989[v] have pointed out that educational technology provides the cognitive scaffolding for students to acquire complex concepts and understand the connection between them. In their study Manning, 1996[vi] and

Green law, 1999[vii] has revealed that educational technology allows teachers and students to communicate both their thoughts and interests in the subject matter. Moreover, Lumsden and Scott, 1988 and Hallberg, 1996[viii] in their study indicated that educational technology acts as a medium through which students can observe the real-life implications of economic theories. Further there are research studies which have indicated that ICT does have an impact on students' achievement for example studies undertaken by Kulik, 1999[ix], Sosin et al., 2004[x], Fushs and Wossman, 2004, [xi], Coates et al., 2004[xii] all have pointed to the same direction.

Thus the above studies clearly point out the existence of positive correlation between the two variables i.e. usage of educational technology and teaching and learning process. But none of the studies have focused on the impact of educational technology on the teaching, and learning, methods of the undergraduate students of the traditional courses in the Indian Universities and particularly what is the impact of educational technology on the student's academic performance at undergraduate level in Indian Universities. With the above broad objective, it was decided to carry forward a pilot study on the degree college students of said institute. Another objective behind conducting the study was to use the results of the study to bring positive pressure on the Management of the College to make more classrooms technology enabled. The second objective germinated from the conclusion of the research conducted on the teachers on Usage of Educational Technology which vividly brings out the fact of the poor infrastructural facility availability in the institute.

The pilot study was conducted on the third year degree students in the month of October, 2015. and the subject chosen for conducting the study was economics and the module chosen within the subject was Indian agriculture. The module is part of the economics subject curriculum of the students of the third year commerce section of S.N.D.T women's University. The subtopics covered under the module were-

- Agricultural production and measures to increase the productivity.
- Agricultural Finance- Developing Institutional sources, Role of NABARD

- Agricultural Marketing in India, Government measures, Regulated markets and cooperative marketing
- Agricultural price, Government price policy and measures
- Food Security concept and need- Role of Public Distribution System, Reorganization of PDS

The methodology adopted in the study is as Follows-Two divisions of third year degree commerce section were randomly chosen. The academic performance of the students in the both the classes were identical and the students also belonged to the similar socio economic background. The students of one division were exposed to sessions assisted by educational technology and students of the other classrooms were taught with the help of traditional chalk and Board method. The modules chosen was introduced in one division with the help of 12 technology enabled sessions of one hour each and the same modules were delivered to the students of other division with help of 12 face to face lecture method of one hour each. The technology tools used in the class environment were Videos, PPT presentation, blogs, mobile devices, internet resources, and ICT package, online quiz. After the completion of the course work a MCQ test was conducted in the both the divisions. The MCQ test contained 15 application based questions. The result of the study clearly upholds the positive relation between academic performance of the students and the usage of educational technology. It is noted in the classroom environment where the technology was used 81 % of students scored marks above 70% whereas in the classrooms where the traditional face to face method was used it was observed that there was a dip in the results as only 56 % of students were able to score percentage above 70 %. Thus we observe a marked difference in the performance of the students with the usage of educational technology.

Conclusion:

The results of the study thus reiterate the conclusions of the earlier studies according to which an appropriate use of ICT in higher education can have significant positive effects on students' achievements. Even though the study has pointed a positive correlation between ICT and students' achievements but a fact which cannot be

ignored is there are other variables which also influence student's performance such as student's characteristics (Haveman and Wolfe, 1995), educational environment Hanusek, 2003 and teachers' characteristics Rivkin et al. (2005), ICT may have an impact on these determinants and consequently the outcome of education. The differences observed in students' performance can thus also be related to the differentiated impact of ICT on standard explanatory factors. The results were presented in the form of case study to both the stakeholders –teachers and management.

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Human Rights Education- Its Importance and Relevance in Practicality in an Indian Context

By Ms. Celin Thomas, Bangalore¹

This article explores the evolution of human rights in terms of its documentation and its impact during the course of human history. This article will focus mainly on the need, relevance and practical application of human rights education within the Indian context.

A brief documented history of Human Rights

The idea and concept of Human Rights has evolved along with human civilisations over several centuries. And they have been perpetuated and pushed forth by people on their own accord. Although the popular perception is that human rights as we know today is a Western concept, it may not be true at all. According to Author William J. Talbott, human rights is a recent development- even in the western world. Talbott has explained it in context of religious freedom². He explains in his book that right to religious freedom which is a human right was first recognized and enforced by Emperors such as Asoka and Cyrus, the Great³. Talbott further argues that, both the emperors were not essentially advocates of human rights but they honoured the right to religious freedom for their subjects. Freedom of practicing a religion of own choice and being treated equally is also an essential human right

¹ Celin Thomas is a student of Law at the CMR University, Bangalore. She has worked for over a decade in the field of social work and she is an alumna of Sophia College for Women & also SNTD Women's University, Mumbai. She is extremely motivated to pursue a litigation career in public law, championing women's rights and the underserved.

² Which Rights Should Be Universal? William J. Talbott: 2005: Oxford University Press: New York: p 40

³ The first documented source of human rights in history can be dated back to 539 BC, the Cyrus cylinder. First Persian Emperor Cyrus, the Great conquered the city of Babylon; he freed the slaves and declared that all people had the right to choose their own religion, also established racial equality. These and other decrees were recorded on a baked-clay cylinder in the Akkadian language, which is now been recognized as the world's first charter of human rights.

recognized and documented even in ancient history as we see in Emperor Cyrus' cylinder.

After Emperor Cyrus, the next recognized document was revealed in 1215 that is often referred to as the "Great Charter" or Magna Carta that was signed by the King of England and is considered as a turning point in human rights. King John and several such rulers of England who violated a number of ancient laws and customs for more than half a century that governed England & its subjects⁴ are the main reason behind Magna Carta. King John's subjects (specifically 25 barons) forced him to sign the Magna Carta, which enumerates what later came to be thought of as human rights. The Magna Carta gave out the right of the church to be free from governmental interference, rights of all free citizens to own and inherit property and to be protected from excessive taxes, it established the right of widows who owned property to choose not to remarry, and established principles of due process and equality before the law. It also contained provisions forbidding bribery and official misconduct. The clause 39 of the Magna Carta is known to be a precursor to all the laws that protect the rights of people who are caught in the web of law with regards to punishments such as exile⁵, unlawful detentions, etc. The Magna Carta is widely viewed as one of the most important legal documents in the development of modern democracy and was crucial in the struggle to establish freedom. The Magna Carta was not a statute but a declaration that was seen as a grant or a gift of certain privileges and freedoms given by a King to his subjects.⁶

Although there have been several documents that were known to people across civilisations and centuries, only a few made the impact that we seem to have been able to record and impress in such a manner so as to practice them, even today. Like some of the known documents that have influenced the course of history and recognized human rights after the Magna Carta are the Petition of Right (1628); United States Declaration of Independence (1776); The Constitution of the United

⁴ 25 Barons

⁵Magna Carta 1215: MANUSCRIPT / CHARTER: <https://www.bl.uk/collection-items/magna-carta-1215>: Last accessed on 31st January 2019

⁶Baker, John: The Reinvention of Magna Carta 1216-1616:2017: Cambridge University Press: United Kingdom: p.6

States of America (1787) and Bill of Rights (1791); Declaration of the Rights of Man and of the Citizen (1789) and the First Geneva Convention (1864).

Finally, under the leadership of Eleanor Roosevelt (United States delegate to the UN)—the Commission set out to draft the document that became the ‘Universal Declaration of Human Rights’ (UDHR), that was adopted by the United Nations General Assembly on 10th December, 1948 at the Palais de Chaillot in Paris. Lastly, there was a comprehensive document which is a Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR). All those bits and pieces of rights and rules documented and at times even lost or forgotten in history were enshrined in the form of 30 articles in this one document that we refer to as UDHR.

It is imperative to note here, that although countries have agreed upon this declaration, it definitely does not imply that they may have the requisite mechanisms in place to protect human rights. At times there will be mechanisms and structures with the backing of law, however, they may be ineffective or inefficient and corrupt even. Which is to say that the mechanisms and provisions to protect human rights are just as important and as much as it is necessary to spell out what those human rights are and for who they are.

Mechanisms in place as of now

There are eight human rights treaties within the United Nations system besides of course the UDHR which was a declaration adopted by the United Nations General Assembly. These treaties are – if ratified by a sovereign nation; conventions that are binding to the nations that are signatories to it. Each of these covenant or convention represents different human rights and also a section of humanity to which it may categorically apply, nevertheless they collectively protect all of us.

1. International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination (CERD), 1995
2. International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ICESCR), 1966

3. International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR), 1966
4. Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW), 1979
5. Convention against Torture and other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment (CAT), 1984
6. Convention on the Rights of the Child (CROC), 1990
7. Convention on the Rights of all Migrant Workers and Members of their Families (CMW), 1990
8. Convention on Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD).

In India with the Protection of Human Rights Act, 1993 enacted by the Parliament is very specific to our sub-continent. The Act explains human rights as guaranteed by our Constitution and also those embodied in the international covenants are in effect enforceable by courts.⁷ Human Rights mean rights relating to life, liberty, equality and dignity of an individual and they are principally universal, inalienable, interdependent and indivisible which is emphasized by UDHR and various other conventions that followed it.⁸

There are several National Human Right Institutions in India and they are the National Human Rights Commission (NHRC) which works closely with State Human Rights Commission (SHRC) located in different states. In addition to these, there are National Commission for Women (NCW), National Commission for Minorities, National Commission for Scheduled Castes, National Commission for Scheduled Tribes, National Commission for Protection of Child Rights, National Commission for Safai Karamcharis, central Information Commission, and Chief Commissioner for Persons with Disabilities.⁹

These institutions and forums provided by laws & treaties give us the much needed impetus in pursuing any violation and also enforcing human rights both in India and Internationally. An education in human rights will definitely empower the student with an ability to harness

⁷ A Guidebook for Human Rights Defenders: People's Watch: Institute of Human Rights Education (IHRE): 2nd Ed: 2010: Madurai, Tamil Nadu: p.1

⁸ Ibid

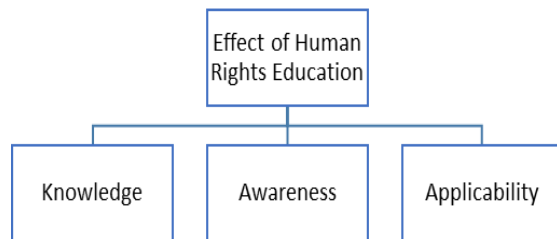
⁹ A Guidebook for Human Rights Defenders: People's Watch: Institute of Human Rights Education (IHRE): 2nd Ed: 2010: Madurai, Tamil Nadu: p.41

these forums by combining knowledge and skills acquired from the course to do the needful in a situation.

Need for educating people of their own rights and that of others...

When there are already documents, charters and declarations and covenants available and accessible to everyone, then why is there a need for Human Rights Education? Ms. Margaret Sampath¹⁰, Deputy Director at SICHREM¹¹ says that ‘Human Rights Education curriculum aims to have a three pronged effect on a student. The idea of such a curriculum is not just limited to awareness, but widening the scope of human rights its relevance and its significance in maintenance of law and order in a society and finally the applicability of the knowledge acquired.’

Ms. Sampath explains that the goal of human rights education is firstly to ensure that the student gains knowledge of what are human rights and how they have evolved. Secondly, to make the student aware of the rights of another individual and its importance. So that they also learn how to treat others with dignity. Thirdly, once the knowledge and awareness is assimilated, the student is expected to know what to do in case they come across any act of violation or denial of human rights. As Robert Ingersoll once said that “Give to every human being every right that you claim for yourself”. This premise is the backbone of the structured curriculum of the human rights education in India.



¹⁰ Ms. Margaret Sampath is the Deputy Director at South India Cell for Human Rights Education & Monitoring- a non-governmental organisation working in the area of human rights for more than two decades and is located in Bangalore, Karnataka state, India

¹¹ South India Cell for Human Rights Education & Monitoring

Relevance and applicability of this education

The relevance and applicability of a course on human rights education is primarily to a human rights defender who are interchangeably referred to as human rights activist, human rights advocate or human rights workers as well. However, this does not limit the scope or target audience of human rights education by any means since knowing your right can always help you define your boundaries to protect your individual self. Education on human rights can also help develop compassion towards those who have been violated and aid in inspiring people in developing mechanisms or be a part of a system that defends and protects rights of people.

The idea is once you know that a right exists, you will know where your freedom ends so that you don't end up violating somebody's rights in the notion of enjoying your constitutionally guaranteed freedom. At the same time, you will be empowered to take the requisite measures when your own individual rights are violated.

Human rights education is also imparted under various different monikers in different organizational and institutional set ups. For instance, attending a workshop on anti-sexual harassment policies at workplace, anti-ragging campaigns in educational institutes, etc. these are ad-hoc activities, however they are equally important and effective as they reach the target audience they are designed for. Annually the University Grants Commission (UGC) makes all varsities to make their students compulsorily sign an online pledge against ragging.¹²

¹² Ragging has ruined countless innocent lives and careers. In order to eradicate it, Hon'ble Supreme Court in Civil Appeal No. 887 of 2009, passed the judgement wherein guidelines were issued for setting up of a Central Crisis Hotline and Anti-Ragging database. In accordance with the orders, UGC (University Grants Commission), Govt. of India has developed this web portal. This portal will contain:

1. Undertaking confirmed by each student and his/her parents or guardians, which will then be stored electronically and will contain the details of each student.

2. Record of registered complaints received and the status of the action taken.

The aim of the portal is to eliminate ragging in all its forms from universities, deemed universities and other higher educational institutions in the country. This will be achieved by preventing its occurrence and punishing those who indulge in

Academic institutions have a great role to play in imparting human rights education in the conventional as well as unusual and creative ways.

Sexual harassment at workplace is also a violation of a human rights. International Labour Organisation has stated that sexual harassment is that “it refers to conduct which is unwanted by the recipient”. In the case of Vishaka V. State of Rajasthan¹³, Hon’ble Mr. Justice J.S. Verma (also former Chief Justice of India) gave guidelines for protection of women at workplace and by also defining sexual harassment.¹⁴ These guidelines came at a time when women were already a part of organized and unorganized sectors but had no redressal mechanism available to protect themselves. This was eventually followed by the enactment 16 years later, Protection of Women from Sexual Harassment at Workplace Act, 2013. Conducting workshops on awareness and educating people on the appropriate behaviour at a workplace is now a must.

From the practicality and applicability perspective, human rights education works well for a human rights defender. Human rights defenders¹⁵ typically include journalists who expose such violations, community workers educating on human rights, trade unionists, women’s rights activists, environmentalists, etc. Such defenders can work independently in groups or private organizations, media or even in government. Defenders promote and protect human rights through peaceful and non-violent means by uncovering violations, subjecting these violations to public scrutiny, empowering individual & groups to claim their rights and press for those responsible to be accountable.¹⁶

ragging, in accordance with the Supreme Court Regulations. (taken from Anti-Ragging UGC website: <http://www.antiragging.in/Site/Aboutus.aspx>)

¹³ 1997 (6) SCC 241

¹⁴ Naikar, D. Lohit: The Law Relating to Human Rights: new Ed: Puliani and Puliani: Bangalore P.541

¹⁵ A Guidebook for Human Rights Defenders: People’s Watch: Institute of Human Rights Education (IHRE): 2nd Ed: 2010: Madurai, Tamil Nadu: p.3

¹⁶ A Guidebook for Human Rights Defenders: People’s Watch: Institute of Human Rights Education (IHRE): 2nd Ed: 2010: Madurai, Tamil Nadu: p.3

The human rights defenders are trained to work in a following scheme so as to enable their safety and ensure the deliverable of seeking justice for the victim/s¹⁷-

- Reduce the threats (through situational analysis and threats assessments)
- Reduce/ improve the vulnerability factors
- Increase/enhance the security capacities- training in security, risk assessment, etc.



Needless to say that the specialized workshops, trainings and seminars meant for an active human rights defenders will be an ongoing activity within organizations. Simply because with time and changes in society and laws the nature of risks involved in this job will also gradually evolve and they may not necessarily reduce but can also aggravate. There are several fellowships and leadership programs available for human rights defenders to enable, enlighten and enhance & encourage the defenders in their pursuit.

Curriculum and its components

SICHREM in association with St. Joseph Evening College has been successfully running a Diploma program on Human Rights in the city of Bangalore for the last 10 years. This course starts with just seven students and today the course admits over 100 students in each year. The Human Rights curriculum developed by Institute of Human Rights

¹⁷ A Guidebook for Human Rights Defenders: People’s Watch: Institute of Human Rights Education (IHRE): 2nd Ed: 2010: Madurai, Tamil Nadu: p.45, 46

Education¹⁸ has three modules which are designed for students of 8th grade in the State of Tamil Nadu. The three modules are namely; Human Rights, Discrimination and Child Rights. The modules are story based and involve assignments in terms of practical activities. Thus making the curriculum both interesting and engaging for the students. Even though the types and nature of atrocities may change with the geography, culture and customs of a region or a nation; what remains constant are the human rights at any given point of time for an individual no matter where they maybe in the world. Hence the education on Human Rights will be holistic and cover the rights of all humans; however, the curriculum could be customized to address the needs of the region. For instance, caste system and its evils are very much India specific and hence the module on Discrimination will need to have a special mention on it in addition to covering the various other kinds of discriminations prevalent in the society. Such as discrimination based on gender, place of birth, skin colour or race, religion and even language.

Trends in Human Rights Education in India

SICHREM has witnessed an increased participation of foreign students in their diploma course on Human Rights that they facilitate with St. Joseph's Evening College in Bangalore in the span of a decade. This is an interesting trend as these foreign nationals are predominantly from Afghanistan, South Sudan and Iraq who are in India in pursuit of higher education in different streams. This only reaffirms that human rights are universal, irrespective of nationality. It's impressive that the Indian curriculum on human rights is being studied and appreciated by foreigners as well.

Education is a liberating force, and in our age it is also a democratising force, cutting across the barriers of caste and class, smoothing out

¹⁸ Institute of Human Rights Education (A programme unit of People's Watch-Tamil Nadu) located in Madurai. The modules were published for school-students to educate and celebrate UN Decade of Human Rights Education (1995-2004).

inequalities imposed by birth and other circumstances.¹⁹ It is imperative to note that Human Rights Education should not be restricted to higher learning schemes in courses such as a law and social work. It should also be made a compulsory subject in school curriculum so as to curb bullying, ragging or any kind of gang violence.

In the year 2000-2001, the National Human Rights Commission received over 70,000 complaints.²⁰ The sheer rise in the number of complaints received demonstrates the growing need of human rights education at various levels in academics and areas outside of it as well. As shocking as this data may seem, it is vital to note that these are only registered offences or complaints seeking justice. The extent and the kinds of violence that go unreported are perhaps much higher. This kind of data must come as a surprise to many as the variety of complaints received speak about violations of various kinds at times even by governmental authorities due to their sheer ignorance and even because sometimes they are the perpetrators.

Sexual harassment and sexual violence is now a tool to perpetuate hate crimes against people and communities. Invariably women, children, minorities or the back classes always take a beating here. Education on human rights and the values that it creates for our life and the behaviour which is most appropriate needs to be promulgated through not only the conventional but every other means of communication available to us. Although there are many institutes that offer education human rights, what remains to be explored is the effectiveness of this education. The students who are exposed to this course, how well are they using this curriculum in their own personal and professional life? How many have been in a position to contribute to the protection of human rights and in what way? What modifications are possible in the curriculum?

Stories of inspiration and surprise are all in store once an evaluation or an impact assessment is conducted amongst the students who pass out

¹⁹ Sharma, S.K & Sharma, Usha: Encyclopedia of Higher Education: Historical survey-post independence period: edited by Suresh Kant Sharma: Vol.2: 2005: Mittal Publications: New Delhi: p.347

²⁰ Needed: More Effective Human Rights Commissions in India: Mandeep Tiana: CHRI News: Summer:2004

of such a course. Human rights education is a must and should also be an ongoing endeavour as it protects the very peaceful co-existence of humanity.

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Developing Advocacy Skills for Parents of Intellectually Disabled Young Adults through the ‘Santoolan model’ - A Conceptual Paper

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There is no greater disability in society than the inability to see a person as more. ~Robert M. Hensel¹

In an era where ‘inclusive development’ is being emphasized as the right path towards sustainable development, focused initiatives for the welfare of persons with special needs are of utmost need, however in today’s world of scientific advancement and broad mindsets, intellectually disabled people are not much considered worthwhile to carry a dignified life or to get absorbed in today’s job market and become contributive towards the economic development of any country.

Introduction

As per the report prepared by the **World Health Organization** and the **World Bank** (2011), it states that approximately 15 percent of the world’s population – about 785 million people – suffers from some type of substantial physical or mental disability ranging from mental retardation to chronic pain to mental illness and the report released by the United Nations, found that these problems are more widespread in low-income countries, as they become worse with poverty. In India, as

¹ **Robert Michael Hensel** (b. May 8, 1969^[1]) was born with the birth defect known as [Spina bifida](#). He is also a [Guinness World Records](#) holder for the longest non-stop wheelie in a [wheelchair](#), covering a total distance of 6.178 miles.^[2] As part of setting his record, he raised money for wheelchair ramps throughout [Oswego, New York](#), his hometown.^[3]

In 2000, realizing the need to focus more on one’s abilities and less on their disabilities, Hensel sought to have a week designated that would bring to light the many talents and accomplishments being made by individuals with disabilities.^[4] Due to his efforts, Oswego County passed a motion that year recognizing Oct. 1-7 as Beyond Limitations week.¹

per Census 2011, 1.2 million people are reported to be intellectually disabled, 25.5% of which are students and 57.7% of them are dependent on their families for survival.

“The message here is that we cannot continue to discriminate against or ignore the needs of such a large proportion of the world’s population,”.

Even though there are schemes, support or services that are available by government and non- governmental organizations for betterment of this large group, but most of the time they are physically nonexistent. Besides that, as a society and parents of these people, either we are not equipped enough or aware enough how to best deal with or bring the best in them. Intellectual disability brings along difficulty in complying with the values set by our society in intellectual and social behavior. The intellectually disabled persons have been traditionally being rejected, isolated, stigmatized, and deprived of society's resources as they are unable to meet these societal set standards of values. **The major concern** here is that having special child is generally considered to be a source of shame and indicative of serious deficiencies in one or both parents. The possibility of having a retarded child is so traumatic and the causes are still so poorly understood that most people typically exclude the possibility from awareness. Furthermore, our culture has not established satisfactory rituals or practices for dealing with intellectual disability. The prevailing approach has traditionally been to abandon the intellectually disabled as "hopeless" and to exclude them from society.

The most important and the immediate support system for intellectually disabled persons are her/his parents. But due to lack of proper knowledge/support about the concept of intellectual disability it brings the feeling of Shame, loss of self-esteem, Ambivalence, depression, self-sacrifice, defensiveness etc. in parents. Hence, the immediate people who require skills for betterment of these individuals here are not the intellectually disabled people, **but their parents** who requires a lot of awareness, skills and best practices to raise their children in such a way that their children become contributive, independent and proud citizens of the country. It is imperative that we the service providers for

intellectually disabled people need to focus upon building the bridge between parents and special children as much as possible. If both synchronize well, their children will achieve more success than the expected margin by our society.

The context:

“Intellectual disability” (earlier known as Mental Retardation) is defined as a disability characterized by remarkably low intellectual functioning (IQ < 70) in conjunction with significant limitations in adaptive functioning (American Association on Mental retardation, 2002). The fact that in addition to the core symptoms, children and adolescents with Intellectual disability often display a number of co-morbid behavioral problems which makes their rearing a big challenge for the parents and family. Prevalence of depression in mothers of mentally retarded children in India seems to be much greater than those reported from studies around the world. The liability associated with rearing such intellectually disabled children usually affects whole of atmosphere of home including routine family life, emotional aspects and financial resources of family (Kaur & Arora, 2010). Hence, for a parent, providing the high level of care required by a child with intellectual challenges may become taxing and may impact both physical and psychological health of caregivers.

Caregivers experience depression, burden, less social support, and less coping resources than non-caregivers (Vitaliano et al., 2002). As a general agreement, intellectual disability can impose psychological problems, social issues, and lifestyle restrictions that can affect quality of life of the caregivers and family members, who also bear the considerable indirect costs of patients’ disability. As per available research studies, the feeling of having an **‘incomplete child’** in the family compel the care giver, especially the mothers into depression resulting in deteriorating the care giving effectively and mentally denying to look the individual with special potentials with special aim in life in spite of their disability and mental restrictions.

Review of Literature:

Stress and depression in parents of disabled children is one of the most important problems that they face, and numerous studies indicate that basically having a difficult child brings about depression in the parents, and this depression is more in mothers than fathers (Tan, 2005). Of course there are some that believe that the thing that mostly causes depression in parents is not disability, but it is these children's behavioral problems that cause depression (Kogel, 1992). Or another study shows that children's behavioral problems are much more stressful for the mothers than the handicap (Baker, 2005). To sum up, numerous studies support this theory that the parents of children that suffer from general developmental disability, show higher degrees of stress (Sanders, 1997). As mentioned, comparative studies done among parents with intellectual disabilities children, showed that the mothers became more stressed than the fathers (Hastings,2005). Perhaps this is due to the reason that mothers get a lot more involved with their children than the fathers, and this is why stress signs are seen more among the mothers rather than the fathers of disabled children (Hastings, 2003). Parents of children with disabilities cope with the same responsibilities and pressures that other parents face; however, one reoccurring theme reported among these parents is the higher amounts of stress they experience and greater demands made by caring for a child with special needs.

(more ROL will be included here to support the problem statement)

Rationale:

Parents of children with special needs tend to face continuous barrage of challenges from societal isolation, financial strain, difficulty finding resources to outright exhaustion or feelings of confusion or burn out. They feel isolated from other parents, supports, family and/or the community. At times parents feel some embarrassment surrounding their children's behaviors or their inability to handle those behaviors in public. Parents may feel the anger, denial, hurt...etc. of grief, but may not acknowledge those feelings and, therefore, never move through those feelings in a healthy way. Lack of knowledge/ awareness about

the issue and available help lead them to increased worry, frustration, hopelessness, stress and sometimes desperation and impulsivity. In India: parents face economic social, financial, legal, technological issues with regard to handling their child with special needs, even though there are a number of programs and initiatives developed by the government there is a lack of knowledge, awareness and lack of scientific recording of practices in the field of special education.

Focusing upon this issue at the organizational level, it was found that parents who came for rehabilitation did not see the potential the child was born with as they had a vision to conform to as per societal acceptance. The blue print the child was born with was getting submerged to keep up with societal expectations. Over the researcher's past 33 years of experience at Shraddha charitable trust, Om creations trust, SPJ Sadhana school and many other organizations, the major focus was always being on **molding the mindset of the parents with feeling of contentment towards their children**. The researcher has observed in many parents, how having an intellectually disabled child in a family was considered a serious stress factor for the parents. They were always or are still at a dilemma of reorienting and reevaluating their family goals, responsibilities and relationships. Hence, it was a felt need by the researcher, as a special educator to equip the parents with advocacy skills alongside equipping their intellectually disabled children with livelihood skills to bring out the best of them towards a successful and satisfactory life for themselves and for their family as well.

The emotional and social stress that parents of special children undergo has been described by various investigators. However, studies showcasing the **interventional model** adopted in any organizational level to tackle this issue is hardly being studied so far. Therefore, we undertook this study

1. To assess the stress in parents of children with intellectual disability.
2. To assess the depression in parents of children with intellectual disability.

3. To study the impact of the “**Santoolan model**” adopted by the researcher in dealing with stress and depression of the parents with intellectually disabled children.

THE INTERVENTIONAL APPROACH:

The belief that drove the researcher in understanding a special Child’s capacity was to apply what the researcher understood from the Indian concept of Purnatva (completeness). This understanding was different from the normal accepted norms that were practiced in the field of special education around the world. The problems that arose while working with children and parents in the last 33 years of work experience of the researcher, gave way to a functional model called the “Santoolan phase”-for parents. This method practiced, has given emotional Santoolan, satisfaction, acceptance and dignity to parents of children with special needs.

The Santoolan for Parents:

The basic understanding the program promotes is to understand beliefs that

- The child is complete the way he/she is born.
- They are not less
- They are born to do something
- They have a plan to be followed in their life

But as parents

- They succumb to rules of the society
- Expected norms
- They are caught in a web of comparison between abilities and scores attained in school
- The program works on students and parents simultaneously to bring a change.

SANTOOLAN: *Sensitizing Attitudes for Normalizing Tendencies and Offsetting Latent Adult Non-acceptance of the child with special needs*

Santoolan or Balance is the last phase of the FACE programme where having placed the students into an environment of normalcy, the focus was then shifted to parental and other adult influences.

The FACE program

Phase 1- *Facing AUTISM through COMMUNICATION with the ENVIRONMENT*

The first Phase of this programme was aimed at creating thinking individual with the capacity to extend his own thinking to everyday situations. The key was to achieve this while accepting the disability of the student and working on his individual programme in spite of this disability. The outcome of this programme was that the student, though still impaired by this disability, was able to first marginally, and later, with adequate experience, fully function in the social and academic activities of the school. Each student was able to develop all ADL Skills and have a certain amount of interest in the curriculum. Where he/she had started out with total lack of interest and awareness in the environment around him, he was now able to relate to it.

Phase 2- KEY OM: *Kriya, Empowerment, Yoga and OM meditation*

Over the years the FACE programme has repeatedly surmounted barriers and evolved into a dynamic progression, creating a therapeutic environment enabling each participant to full potential. Behavioral Techniques fade out autistic behavior and restore normal functioning to an extent, besides, exploring and inducting other viable avenues. The focus was to establish a better balance between the right brain and the left brain and create a back door to overcome the autistic disabilities.

Phase 3- L I N C S: *Linking & Initiating a Network of Communication through Synergy*

The Key OM programme had opened up the students to voluntary discretion and choice.

Synergy was created at 3 levels:

Peer interactions - where connection between the peers formed a basis for communication which aided and brought forth the mentor's persuasive strategies.

Trainee and Mentor - where the relationship constantly depended upon accountability, responsibility and ethics between the two.

Relationship of the students with society - where having made a natural adjustment, the students of previously abnormal environment slipped unconsciously into a 'mode of normalcy'

Phase 4- SANTOOLAN: *Sensitizing Attitudes for Normalizing Tendencies and Offsetting Latent Adult Non-acceptance of Autism*

Santoolan or Balance is the last phase of the FACE programme where having placed the students into an environment of normalcy, the focus was then shifted to parental and other adult influences. Using the face program by educators also allows parents to attain and successfully reach the Santoolan phase.

Through this, they learn about goodness or the purpose of the child in a natural way.

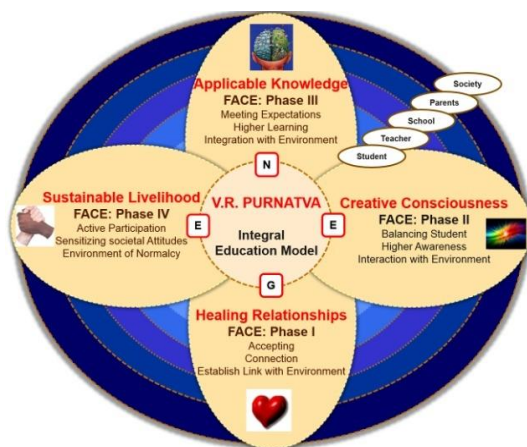
Start helping real self: They learn that the child grows through its potential (ability the child has)

Participate in training not out of pity

The Santoolan phase: Gives parents a reality checks by making them accept the child's ability and narrowing down unrealistic expectations through counseling, training on the job is of utmost importance to achieve Santoolan or satisfaction.

Encouraging parents to experience complete acceptance towards the child increases self confidence in the child and increases his/her performance.

Parents who have understood the value of Santoolan has become catalysts for societal change



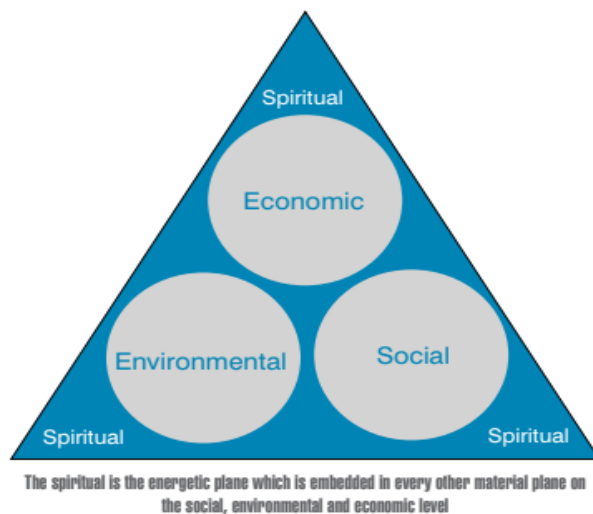
as they directly influence people around them into learning the value of “Santoolan”

The practice: Way the parents undergo Santoolan:

The parents fill in a form about details of their child, which gives a base level about the child, and his/her functioning and the circumstances of the parent. At the time of assessment there is brief interaction that helps the educator understand the parent.

Later at the next stage of interview the parents undergo an individual session with the educator to share their difficulties. The educator retrieves information through her interaction and gives a practical reflection of their problems. Parents undergo an individual session with the educator to share their difficulties. The practitioner then allows them to see the alternative picture. Each program is individualized and adapted as per the requirement and the need of the hour.

The parent **must practice meditation** to be calm and understanding to understand that the child and the parents are 2 different entities. Parent must self-introspect and bring in a change in them and thus see the natural innate talent of their child, accept him or herself as a complete whole.



Conclusion:

As a parent one could relate to this saying by Sree Ramakrishna Paramhansa that “you cannot move a needle as long as you have three things- *lajja*, *ghrina*, *bhay* that is embarrassment, revulsion and fear”. These children make you conquer all three. Though as an educator he or she are still trying to conquer the fear of the future when he or she may be no more or be helpless to help and to conquer the fear that can only happen if you submit totally to god’s will and accepting that what happens, happens for the best.

Parents or the immediate family of a child is like the anchor in the stormy ocean. Family is the first line of defense for their loved child. If family members deteriorate due to stress of raising special kids, it will result in child having no ongoing support system or the encouragement to reach to their best capabilities. Therefore, families must be prepared first and dealt with to keep a strong health physically, mentally and spiritually to offer a better life to their special children and to self. Families should learn to provide support, praise and encouragement.

Hence, programs and services designed to uplift the lives of such children/ young adults should incorporate explicit protocols *to focus equally on the parents/ family level*, especially towards the primary caregivers through counseling, treatment (if required) and regular screening of mothers. Attempting an all-inclusive intervention, Om Creation Trust, a social firm incorporated not only the skill and employment opportunities for the intellectually disabled, but also provided the parents with the platform to get aware, learn skills to deal with their children and understand their special children better. In Integrating a child with special education into work space, OM Creations Trust and Shraddha Charitable Trust has successfully practiced Santoolan model and has helped numerous parents to rethink the established norms and work out a self-driven model. The program training is available for educators, practitioners, counselors who are working with parents, and are looking for an alternative way to have the right way to successfully attain a positive rehabilitation path for person with disabilities and their families.

This study to understand how this ‘Santoolan model’ has impacted on the parents of the young adults associated with Om creations Trust and Shraddha Charitable Trust, could be a learning experience for many other likeminded individuals and organizations to deal intellectual disability in a better way.

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Problems of Higher Education in India

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India's key strength is its favorable demography - the average age of its population will be 29 years in 2020. The demographic dividend translates into growth in several ways. It holds the promise of an expanding middle class, affordable labour force, productivity growth, and thereby giving rise to greater economic growth.

These dynamics also indicate that India holds an important place in the global education industry with one of the largest networks of higher education institutions in the world. By 2030, with nearly 140 million in the college-going age group, one in every four graduates in the world will be a product of the Indian higher education system. The already existing challenges for Indian higher education – access, equity and quality will only deteriorate unless we significantly transform our higher education model.

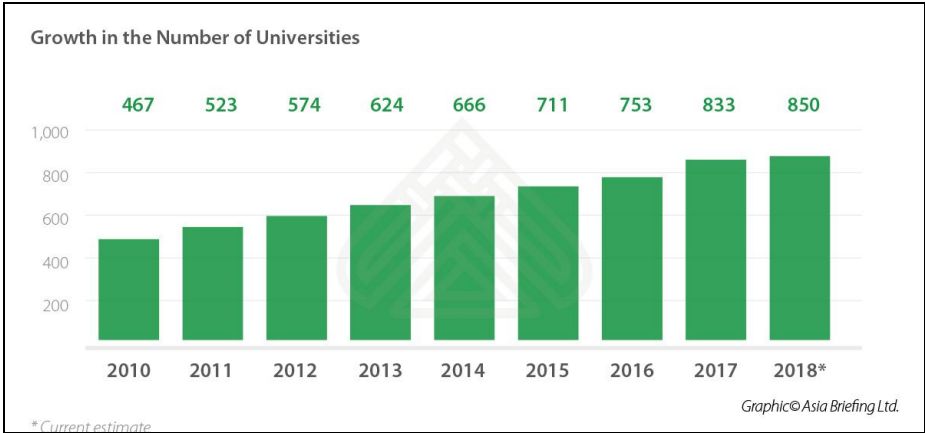
INTRODUCTION

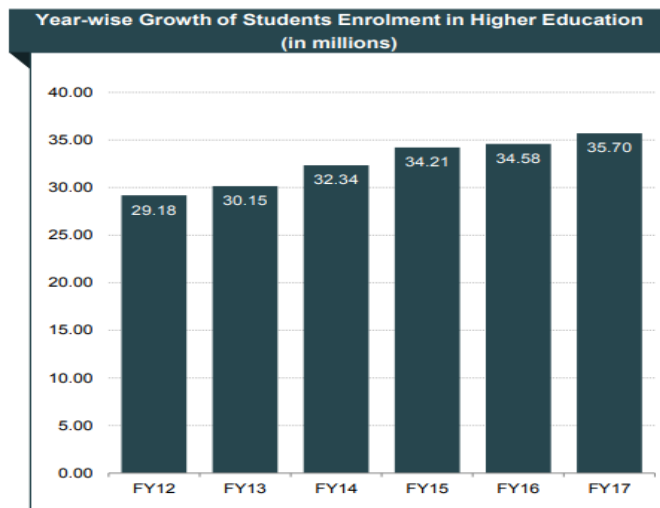
Over the last two decades, India has remarkably transformed its higher education landscape. It has one of the largest networks of higher education institutions in the world. With well-planned expansion and a student-centric learning-driven model of education, India has not only bettered its enrolment numbers but has dramatically enhanced its learning outcomes. As a result, today, India's 70 million student population is a force to reckon with. Among them are potential thought leaders, researchers and academicians – positioned at the helm of knowledge creation. Among them are entrepreneurs and executives of the future, industry-ready and highly sought after. From among them emerges India's massive workforce, the engine of its US\$13 trillion economy.

Despite these strides of progress, India’s higher education institutions are not yet the best in the world – India has fewer than 25 universities in the top 200. The promise of excellence and equity i.e. the challenge to provide higher education in cost-effective ways to lead to employment is still a cause for concern to the policy makers.

SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

With both the Government and the private sectors stepping up to invest in the Indian education sector, the number of schools and colleges have seen an uptrend over the past few years. The Government’s initiative to increase awareness among all sections of the society has played a major role in promoting higher education among the youth. The number of colleges and universities in India reached 39,050 and 850, respectively in 2017-18 and India had 35.70 million students enrolled in higher education in 2017.





Source: *UGC Annual Report 2015-16, UNESCO Global Education Digest 2010, MHRD Annual Report*

With almost 45 percent of its population under the age of 25 years, India confronts a massive challenge of increasing access to quality educational institutions to facilitate economic growth in the country. Outsiders also note the entrenched rural-urban divide in India's education sector, where social status, income levels, and gender dictate school and college admissions. Access to quality education in India is also limited to people who can afford it. Also the growth of higher education needs to be in direct proportion to employability to ensure economic growth. All this calls for restructuring of the higher education scenario in India.

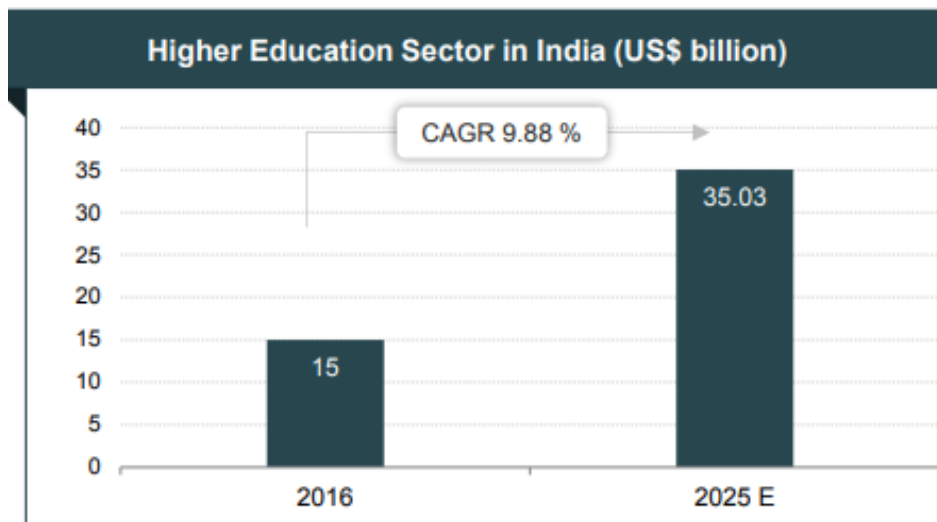
OBJECTIVE OF THE STUDY

While India has made significant progress in ensuring access to primary education, the proportion of students who remain in the education system until higher education is considerably less. The paper will study the present scenario of higher education in India with emphasis on the following three parameters:

- Public expenditure in higher education in India.
- The Cost-Quality paradox of higher education in India
- The Skewed higher education-employability ratio

ECONOMICS OF HIGHER EDUCATION

The education sector in India is poised to witness major growth in the years to come as India will have world's largest tertiary-age population and second largest graduate talent pipeline globally by the end of 2020. The sector is estimated to reach US\$ 144 billion by 2020 from US\$ 97.8 billion in 2016. Higher education sector in India is expected to increase to US\$ 35.03 billion by 2025 from US\$ 15 billion in 2016. Around 35.7 million students were enrolled in higher education in India during 2016-17. Government target of Gross Enrolment Ratio (GER) is 30 per cent for higher education by 2020 to drive investments. The spending in higher education sector is expected to grow at 18 per cent from Rs 46,200 crore (US\$ 6.78 billion) in 2016 to reach Rs 232,500 crore (US\$ 34.12 billion) in the next 10 years.

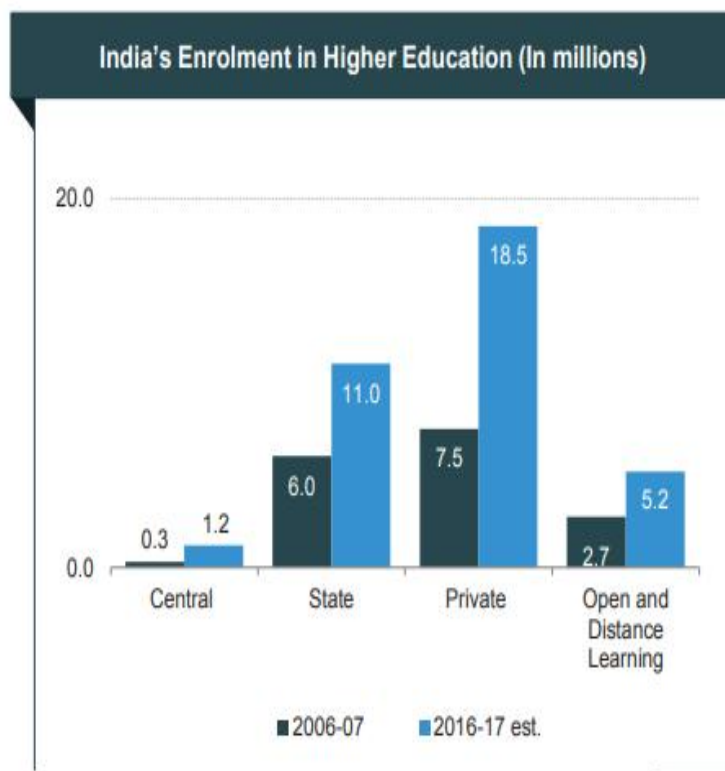


Source: UGC Annual Report 2014-15

PUBLIC EXPENDITURE IN HIGHER EDUCATION

Through the expansion of the education sector in India over the years, most of the Universities were public institutions with powers to regulate academic activities on their campuses as well as in their areas of jurisdiction through the affiliating system. However, over the years

the government expenditure on education, as a percentage of the GDP, has been decreasing consistently. Six years ago, that is in 2012-13, education expenditure was 3.1% of the GDP. It fell in 2014-15 to 2.8% and registered a further drop to 2.4% in 2015-16 and 2.6% in 2016-17. However, given the limited resources, the Government is consistently trying to improve the situation. There has been a significant increase in the share of the state private universities as part of total universities from 3.43 per cent in 2008-09 to 34.82 per cent as of April 2018. Nearly 22 million students (65%) are enrolled in private institutions in various courses.



Note: est – estimated;

Source: Census 2011, Ministry of HRD, UGC, AICTE, NCTE, MHRD and INC ., UGC Annual Report 2013-14

While government-owned institutions for higher education increased from 11,239 in 2006-07 to 16,768 in 2011-12 (49%), private sector institutions recorded a 63% growth in the same period from 29,384 in

2006-07 to 46,430 in 2011-12, according to the 12th five-year plan document of the erstwhile Planning Commission. This proliferation of large number of institutions, many of doubtful quality, in this sector led to a skewed growth in higher educational institutions.

COST QUALITY PARADOX OF HIGHER EDUCATION

The rising cost of higher education shows a rapid growth in the education sector with a market worth of around Rs. 7,08,000 crores for current year-2017. Currently, the higher education in India contributes to about 60% and schooling education is around 40% of the market size. It is estimated with the current scenario that the average cost of MBA degree will be around 50-60 Lakhs (INR) until the year 2025; while the cost for an engineering degree will be around 25-30 Lakhs (INR) till year- 2025. To add to this the cost in private colleges is very high compared to government institutions.

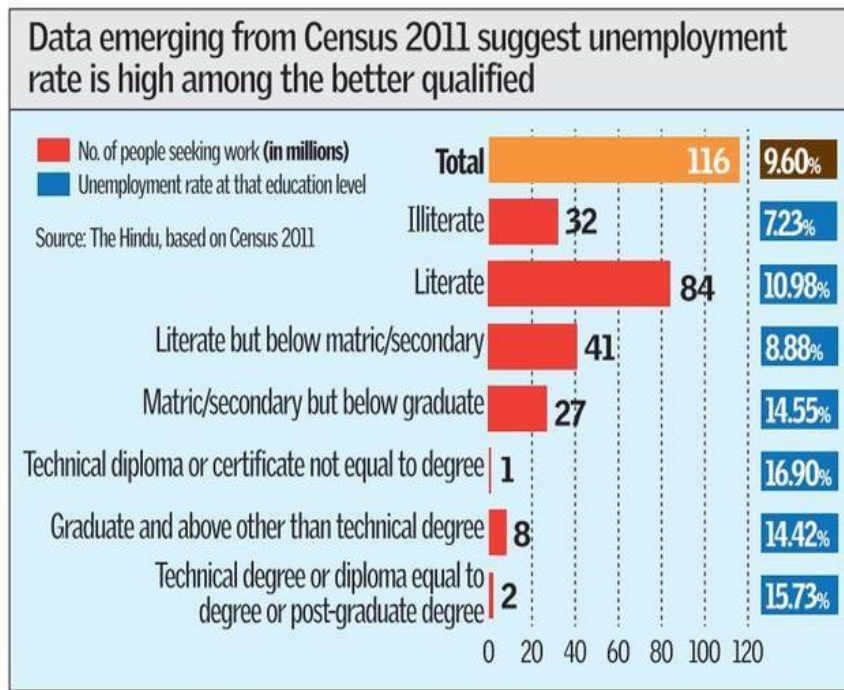
In public-funded colleges, the fees are financed through loans that make education undesirable for many of those who can't afford the burden of clearing of such huge loans. According to the survey, the middle-class family spends around 60% of salary in their children's education including fees, books, uniforms, transport cost, home tuition fees and in other career advancement works. The study shows that the average parents have to spend around Rs.30 lakhs in raising a child from pre-school education to higher secondary education by year-2025. Reiterating this fact AICTE Vice-Chairman MP Punia raised concerns over the high cost of higher education in India wherein the investments made are so high students are not able to recover them his entire life, even after qualifying as professionals. Punia said higher education in India is not sustainable as the per capita income was Rs. 60,000 and the cost of studies and expenses associated with it were around Rs. 2 lakhs. This rising cost of higher education makes a lot of parents in worry situation. Most of them can't even think to give them a good education because of higher cost. Indian parents really need a little relief from such high educational costs. And to add to it, not all institutions offer quality education. Most of these institutions are nothing more than shops selling degrees, according to a report of the National Sample Survey (NSS). While there are a few (institutions) which can be

identified as ‘Centres of Excellence’, both in the public and private sectors, there are a large number which are mediocre, some of them could well be described as ‘degree shops’.

SKewed Higher Education-Employability Ratio

The irony is that despite increasing enrollment in higher education, educational opportunities and traditions that Indian Universities have built up, since independence have been able to produce graduates, capable only of pursuing limited careers, but, in the new globally competitive environment that is emerging in the country, the Indian student is now required to develop a multifaceted personality to cope up with the rapid changes in the world at large. This is asserted by the study made by FICCI: India turns out about 350,000 engineers and 2.5 million other university graduates annually, yet at any given time five million graduates are unemployed.

WHO ARE INDIA'S UNEMPLOYED?



The data of Census 2011 analysed by The Hindu shows that of the 116 million Indians who were either seeking or available for work, 32 million were illiterate and 84 literates. Among literates, unemployment rates were higher among the better qualified, highest of all among the 7.2 million people with a technical diploma or certificate other than a degree. Overall, India's unemployment rate grew from 6.8 p.c. in 2001 to 9.6 p.c. in 2011, based on official Census data. A challenge for the country is driving change that will ensure a competitive, skilled workforce well-equipped for the vagaries of a knowledge economy.

In May 2018, the Times Higher Education World University Rankings, which rates about 1,000 global institutions did not feature even one Indian institute in the overall Top 100. India's poor ranking in global indexes of higher education reinforced a growing sense of crisis, became a matter of national shame and is increasingly being used to drive policy and funding decisions by the federal government.

RECENT INITIATIVES

The Government of India has taken several steps including opening of IIT's and IIM's in new locations as well as allocating educational grants for research scholars in most government institutions. Furthermore, with online modes of education being used by several educational organizations, the higher education sector in India is set for some major changes and developments in the years to come. Some recent policy decisions of the government with far-reaching consequences could be the first step to improve these global rankings, with emphasis on quality over quantity:

- Designate a few Indian universities as "Institutes of Eminence."
- Granted "autonomy" to 60 other universities and colleges.
- Replace India's University Grants Commission, the federal body regulating higher education for decades, with an even more centralized and controlling body called the Higher Education Commission.

Also, the total amount of Foreign Direct Investments (FDI) inflow into the education sector in India stood at US\$ 1.75 billion from April 2000

to June 2018, according to data released by Department of Industrial Policy and Promotion (DIPP). Some of the other major initiatives taken by the Government of India in the field of higher education are:

- In August 2018, Innovation Cell and Atal Ranking of Institutions on Innovation Achievements (ARIIA) were launched to assess innovation efforts and encourage a healthy competition among higher educational institutions in the country.
- In August 2018, Government of India launched the second phase of 'Unnat Bharat Abhiyan' which aims to link higher educational institutions in the country with at least five villages. The scheme covers 750 such institutions.
- In order to boost the Skill India Mission, two new schemes, Skills Acquisition and Knowledge Awareness for Livelihood Promotion (SANKALP) and Skill Strengthening for Industrial Value Enhancement (STRIVE), have been approved by the Cabinet Committee on Economic Affairs (CCEA), Government of India, with an outlay of Rs 6,655 crore (US\$ 1.02 billion) and will be supported by the World Bank.
- NITI Aayog is launching the Mentor India Campaign which will bring leaders and students together at more than 900 Atal Tinkering Labs in India, as part of the Atal Innovation Mission. As of June 2018, 5,441 schools have been selected across India for establishing Atal Tinkering Labs (ATLs) under the Atal Innovation Mission (AIM).
- The Ek Bharat Shreshtha Bharat (EBSB) campaign is undertaken by Ministry of Human Resource Development to increase engagement between states, union territories, central ministries, educational institutions and general public.
- Prime Minister Mr Narendra Modi launched the Skill India initiative – 'Kaushal Bharat, Kushal Bharat'. Under this initiative, the government has set itself a target of training 400 million citizens by 2022 that would enable them to find jobs. The initiatives launched include various programmes like: Pradhan Mantri Kaushal Vikas Yojana (PMKVY), National Policy for Skill Development and Entrepreneurship 2015, Skill Loan scheme, and the National Skill Development Mission.

In the Union Budget 2018, Finance minister Arun Jaitley announced a new initiative of the government—“Revitalising Infrastructure and Systems in Education (RISE)” to step up investments in research and related infrastructure in premier educational institutions and HEFA, a joint venture company of Canara Bank and Ministry of Human Resource Development which provides financial assistance for creation of educational infrastructure and R&D in India’s premier higher educational Institutions, was tasked to fund this initiative. In June 2018 the Union Cabinet approved a proposal for expanding the scope of Higher Education Financing Agency (HEFA) by expanding its capital base to Rs 10,000 crore and tasking it to mobilise Rs 1 trillion by 2022.

CONCLUSION

Today, India is the largest contributor to the global workforce, its working age population surpassing 950 million. It is no surprise then that, India has emerged to be the world’s third largest economy - an achievement underpinned, no doubt, by its unique demographic advantage, but also a prospect that would not have translated into reality if not for the country’s pioneering reforms in university education over the past 20 years.

Despite these strides of progress, India’s higher education institutions are not yet the best in the world – India has fewer than 25 universities in the top 200. The promise of excellence and equity i.e. the challenge to provide higher education in cost-effective ways to lead to employment is still a cause for concern to the policy makers.

The education sector has seen a host of reforms and improved financial outlays in recent years that could possibly transform the country into a knowledge haven. With human resource increasingly gaining significance in the overall development of the country, development of education infrastructure is expected to remain the key focus in the current decade. This can only be achieved with effective public-private partnership in the education sector that will pave the way to make India’s demographic dividend a boon.

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