# INNOVATION: ENHANCING QUALITY IN HIGHER EDUCATION SYSTEM

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## ABSTRACT

Innovation is nothing new to human civilization. In fact it is indispensable for the growth of humanity. Mankind also has not let this attribute to remain unexplored. Instead it has fully used this to full potential. Innovation is timeless and universal and belongs to all ages and classes, overcoming boundaries. Education is the one discipline or institution which has enabled all to discover their talent and show their innovation in a variety of ways- be it teaching, learning, designing or pedagogical skills. It involves all the disciplines and brings out an amalgamation of knowledge, thus paving way for a multidisciplinary approach to all subjects. Innovation facilitates to connect, grow and give wings to imagination. To generate an innovative, independent, creative and reliable ambience for the learners to learn, unlearn and relearn and feel comfortable in their own learning milieu, teachers of the first water are required to help students realize their goal. From democratizing access to key services such as education, healthcare, banking and finance, to redefining every aspect of the way we work, live and approach things, technology has completely transformed the way we live for the better in an unimagined manner. Given that the up gradation of teaching methodologies is the pressing necessity of the current post pandemic times, need for innovation is what we are on the lookout for. With the rising need for novel methods of teaching learning such as blended learning, flipped classroom concept, MOOCs, synchronous teaching, video conferencing and multiple interactive platforms, teachers need all the help required to beat the

heat of corona virus pandemics, and also to realise their true proficiencies. To that end, my paper is a humble endeavour to explore the various value-driven offerings that have and will redefine education sector, and raise the bar of innovation for the whole academic ecosystem. In this way teaching fraternity will get a chance to showcase their best minds and ideas to help develop teaching pedagogy in a manner most suited to the learners with varying learning levels even in adverse circumstances.

**KEYWORDS:** Innovation, knowledge, academic, pedagogy, technology.

Our society is on the cusp of a technological revolution that has fundamentally altered the way we think, work, and live. In its magnitude, the transformation is anything that humankind has ever experienced. In these unprecedented times of the spread of pandemic, the way the technology has unfolded, all the stakeholders have been taken by surprise, be it from the public and private sectors to academia and civil society. Already people are overwhelmed by the unlimited power, functions and capacity of mobiles phones and the introduction of emerging technology breakthroughs in almost all the fields such as artificial intelligence, robotics, the Internet of Things has made human beings demigods.

Like all other revolutions that have preceded it, the Industrial Revolution 4.0 holds huge potential to improve the quality of life for people around the world. To date, those who have been able to afford and access the digital world have been the most benefitted ones. Digital advancement has made possible new thinking and as a result novel products and services that have increased the efficiency, comfort and pleasure of our personal lives.

Our society is in a continuous state of change. Change calls for innovation and innovation leads to progress. It has been strongly felt by the academia that education is the path to innovation. For persistent growth and sustainability, we need to be creative and innovative at the same time. Creativity is thinking new and innovation is doing new.

At this time of crises, one is reminded of Project 2061, a long term project, initiated in 1985 to bring about transformation in science and technology. The project was named after Comet Halley, which is supposed to return to Earth after 76 years. It was believed that the resistance to change in the field

of education will take at least this much time. But the current situation commenced by the pandemic has made them reconsider their belief. The educational ecosystem has experienced a colossal transformation due to technology. Technology is accelerating at an unprecedented pace, thus shaking everyone out of his inertia. Organisations that have kept pace with the change have thrived well and have made their lives better and comfortable, thus proving 'survival of the fittest'.

In the current pandemic times when the overall system has collapsed and all the social, economic, emotional, intellectual, and physical life has undergone a sea change, the future of the world has also gone highly uncertain and doubtful. The major setback has been faced by the young minds as they are confronting a tough time in the wake of closure of educational campuses world over. Education is one of the most crucial and critical parameters to gauge the development of any nation. In the wake of COVID-19 pandemic, this sector has undergone sea change and has affected the lives of all specially students adversely. In fact there is a writing on the wall that clearly indicates that the crisis is not going to be over soon. The protocol followed to stop the blowout of the disease is physical distancing and lockdown. In this scenario, it is not easy and feasible to carry out normal and physical methods of teaching.

In order to tide over the situation and to avoid loss of studies of students, several online teaching learning pedagogies have been developed as a result of Industrial Revolution4.0. It is a dire necessity of the times that to keep the students engaged and to continue with their uninterrupted learning process, several innovations are brought about to help resurrect their engagement and keep their curiosity alive. Educators around the world have indulged in learning and adapting themselves to newer and digitalised ways of teaching in order to bridge the gap caused by this pandemic and have switched over to the virtual teaching making 2020-21 the cybernetic academic year. They are coming up with innovative ideas such as using simulated space as well as artificial intelligence in order to meet the demands of times. Thus they are making every possible effort to make their teaching methods more interactive, interesting, and knowledge based not only to engage the focus of the students but also to help building proficiencies and abilities of their students.

The parents worldwide are facing the challenges of their kids losing concentration, interest and other practical knowledge which was earlier a part of their curriculum possible in physical class rooms. So the educators, administrators and policy makers have initiated stringent efforts to put these challenges in the foreground and find suitable alternatives to them. It has been found that globally over 1.2 billion progenies have got the heat of COVID-19 crises and are currently taking education remotely using digital platforms.

In order to tide over this unprecedented situation, UNESCO has urged the policy makers world over to ensure uninterrupted learning of students by proposing multiple alternative online channels along with myriad modes of technical knowhow, selecting appropriate digital learning tools, online seminars, webinars and creation of user friendly online learning platforms.

Many educational institutions are actively engaged in updating the technical skills of their faculty by organising faculty development programmes, giving hands-on-experience of various e learning resources, learning management systems and making them ready for our new normal education world. A lot of innovative, easily accessible, engaging and interactive methods of teaching have been evolved which are now becoming popular and are being widely used by educators and educational administrators. In today's time of crises, the need of these innovative methods is becoming all the more imperative. These technologies have been existing since long and are now being used extensively. Its only that we were averse to it and didn't feel the need to use or learn it. But the current pandemic situation has made it mandatory for all the educators to resort to it to ensure continuous teaching learning.

Using digital technology to transform classroom experience into online or blended mode is crucial, and it should be made more interesting and engaging for students studying from distance. Educators are using platforms such as Zoom, Microsoft Teams, Google Classrooms, Moodle, Cisco Webex, Udemy, Coursera, and many more to deliver lectures and are at the same time using online resources for the students. These are some of the popular and user friendly online modes used by educators to provide innovation in teaching and making it more interesting and engaging at the same time. Besides providing a blend of tools apart from audio-visual there are

interesting power point presentations, YouTube videos, Excel, spreadsheets, discussion forums for students, smartboard features to make teaching and learning more interactive. There are also multiple-choice quizzes through Google forms, Kahoot, Hot Potatoes, with instant analysis and feedback, grading of assignments, exams, and Assessments through data analytics which is considered the most potent example of innovation in higher education. Students enjoy learning from hands-on experience and pay attention to things that give them challenges to pursue. With the invasion of digital technology, many technocrats are coming up with digitised devices and services to enhance the learning of the students. Now educators can focus more on competency based education as it is more student centric and efficient and can lead to more innovations. Video streaming in the form of YouTube videos, flipped classrooms, etc is the most common and widely used tool in K-12 and Higher Education teachers that has made teaching learning very interesting and easily comprehensible. Artificial Intelligence is becoming a topic of Research in universities throughout the world and is making learning easier and interesting. Generation of instant scores and certificates has also increased the interest of the learners in exploring new paradigms of learning.

There are many courses such as MOOCs initiated by the government and private organisations to facilitate online learning among educators such as SWAYAM, Coursera, Udemy, etc. that provide multiple courses in variety of subjects.

All these courses and online platforms provide a multifaceted and dynamic nature of learning and teaching. Through virtual resources and digital books and virtual classes, educators are providing an amalgamation of all these experiences to students such as blended learning, flipped classrooms, YouTube videos, PPTs, etc. to motivate them to pursue knowledge and learn more. Educators are responsible for incorporating innovation and thus creating an altogether new knowledge for the young. Here our responsibility to nurture, guide and support young minds becomes all the more important and yet crucial for their future. The New Education Policy 2020 launched by the Govt. of India focuses on enhancing the skills of the students and hence make them market perfect. The scope of innovation in the fields of technology specially in academic landscapes has proved to be a boon for our

Millennial youth. As we all are well aware that the trials and tribulations ahead for the humanity are galore, but human mind is also fertile and it has been able to salvage human beings in all kinds of crises. With the help of technology, teachers at a small institution in a rural place can collaborate with researchers in an urban setting in some laboratory. For a country like India, students need courses that are focused more on competency-based learning, and here comes the role of ICT tools. We, as educators, should always keep the pyramid of knowledge move ahead by adding to them the things required to keep our learners updated with knowledge and the tools also to facilitate learning. Seeing the present situation, the world now needs people with multiple skills amalgamated with the right proportion of technical and managerial know how. There is also a dire need of funding the higher education institutions by the government or other agencies to speed up the renovation and expansion of resources to meet the changing demands of the teachers and students. With the spread of pandemic and subsequent fall of economy, the state funding to education sector has drastically reduced worldwide.

Innovation in Teaching Methods is an effective approach to make positive change in students' behaviour and attitude towards learning, to improve their motivation and engagement. The results of the change have bilateral nature – they can affect students' results and understanding of the educational content and create conditions for an effective learning process. Innovative teaching methodologies will lead to a learning society in which the creative and intellectual abilities of students will allow them to meet the goals of transformation and development.

Innovation leads to innovation. As today's youth is born and nurtured into digits, so innovative teaching pedagogy has become all the more necessary to keep students' attention focussed. The current digital environment has completely overhauled our life including our modes of communication, behaviour and even thought process. It has also impacted our relationships. Moreover, the brain also gets impacted and moulded by the environment on which it feeds and today the world is immersed in high tech computer environment.

In order to comply with the current crises, the scope of pedagogy has been considerably widened and is suitably blended with razor sharp technology. A

highly innovative and creative landscape to help teachers grow and adapt and the right attitude to teaching needs is what is seriously required. More efforts for digital generation, acclimatising to the changing scenario, and introducing advancement in teaching- learning aids leads to thriving. The educators are also required to shed their inhibitions of coming to terms with latest know how of various digital teaching platforms and tools to make teaching learning interesting, knowledgeable and easily accessible. All these innovations are going to bring about a transformation in the teaching pedagogies. From education 2.0, we have now moved ahead and are now on the cusp of a new phase which is education 4. 0. Education, which was considered as moving between the teacher and the student, is now attired in an altogether new robe, that of the learner being independent and making her own connections with the innumerable information sources and learning at her own pace. This fourth industrial revolution brings artificial intelligence, and digital technology to help the students have easy access to learning and acquiring skills, thus ushering in an era of a new approach to learning. It has been felt by the academicians that sustainability of lifelong learning is made easy with digital technology and mobile devices thus empowering the learner with digital literacy, mobile (learning) literacy and multi-literacies as an imperative aspect of holistic development.

In a nutshell, we would say that with the intervention of technology, educators have changed the pedagogies and are coming up with project based learning, scenario based learning, inquiry based learning and competency based learning and thus help students create their own learning. Technology which was considered only for engineering and computer science fields has now been embraced to be assimilated in the mainstream education. Cutting edge interdisciplinary programmes are what is required the most. We need to hit refresh on our tech education now. Humanities and technology, the once estranged siblings, have now been welded together as digital humanities and have been intermingled into conventional education system.

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