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Need of Interdisciplinary Studies in Higher Education**Dr. Patil Vijaykumar Ambadasrao***Asstt. Prof. Nalanda Nritya Kala Mahavidyalaya, Mumbai.***Abstract**

Higher Education in India is seriously observed, critically acclaimed, systematically scrutinized and comprehensively planned. It has gone through various stages of modification. The current status is the outcome of the visionary directives which had been initiated at earlier and recent stages. The renaissance, restoration and revolutionary periods in national life are clearly depicted in it. The credibility of higher education in India is enhanced in the ultramodern society. Today, irrespective of social strata, education has reached out to almost every segment of Indian society. The policy, 'education for all,' is reaching to all and has proved decisive and rewarding.

Key Words: Interdisciplinary studies, higher education, modification.

Introduction:

Higher Education in India is seriously observed, critically acclaimed, systematically scrutinized and comprehensively planned. It has gone through various stages of modification. The current status is the outcome of the visionary directives which had been initiated at earlier and recent stages. The renaissance, restoration and revolutionary periods in national life are clearly depicted in it. The credibility of higher education in India is enhanced in the ultramodern society. Today, irrespective of social strata, education has reached out to almost every segment of Indian society. The policy, 'education for all,' is reaching to all and has proved decisive and rewarding.

It is a proud moment to note a considerable increase in higher education. The trend of pursuing higher education is in full swing and the intensity and number will substantially increase in near-future. Use of advanced technological resources in (virtual) classroom is substantially adding to the processes of teaching, learning and particularly expanding learning abilities. In contemporary context (l)earning is

becoming an intellectual joy as e-resources are included in teaching and learning process.

Learning today is multi-layered. Systematic progression from Kindergarten to post-research is crystal clear. Depending on a person's ability, this systematic layered progression works at various levels. Earn while you learn and (l)earn schemes are in vogue. This has attracted a mobile group towards education. This multi-faceted group is vital, vibrant and trendsetting. (L)earners are investing to make our educational system more productive, focused and multidimensional.

Various commissions:

Indian education system is systematically designed. Sadler Commission (1917-19), Calcutta University Commission, the Central Advisory Board of Education (CABE), The University Education Commission, presided over by Dr. S. Radhakrishnan, The Kothari Commission (1964-66), National Policy on Education, 1968 have all played a key role in the progress of education in India. University Grants Commission (UGC), All India Council for Technical Education (AICTE)

and others have been designed to control various streams of Higher Education in India and divert them in the correct direction. They are not only lucrative but also are trying to enhance credibility of contemporary educational strata.

Concurrent Trends:

Higher education in India is in the transformational process. It rigorously is in the need of new institutions of apex standards. Renowned tycoons are setting their own educational institutions to promote their dreams. It is also substantially adding to channelize best practices in education in concurrent society. These are easily adaptable and adoptable in the imbibing the culture of the globalization and crystalizing the educational institutions for specified cause. These educational institutions are financially too strong and supported, channelized and nurtured by scholars. Their infrastructural setups, quality advanced labs and human resources are of acute quality standards. Healthy competitions between such institutions must be used by government authorities for betterment of Indian society.

Era of globalization is helping us to get merged with global scenario. It makes us think from a view point of multi-dimensions to take a final call on adapting and adopting trends in education. Glocal (i.e. global and local) constraints are diverse. Each segment of Indian society is different, unique and specified. Each subgroup wants to get education at par. This urgent need tempts one to see an upgraded version of educational system.

As said earlier, in India, (l)earning is becoming multi-dimensional. Due to financial, social, political and other constraints, one wants to select that course (education) which will make one perfect to live in style. Through this urge, trends like professional courses, integrated courses and contractual courses have emerged. Many of these are rewarding and will

change the traditional way of (l)earning. This trend will surely get modified soon and become a hallmark for upcoming generation. "The 20th century will be remembered for its intellectual discoveries of relative and quantum mechanics and for the interpretation of the structure of DNA-discoveries that have enabled researchers to unravel some of nature's secret and fundamental behaviour of some of its life forms."¹

The mass that is attracted towards higher education is much focused. This group knows the answers of journalistic questions who, where, and what. But they better know the answers to questions of how and why. It presents unified identity of learners who want to learn for the sake of learning.

The group that tempts to look seriously at educational system in India is highly educated, focused, matured and dedicated. Those who are already working as faculty, engineers, doctors, managers or any other professionals are keen to undertake interdisciplinary study/studies. This is an outcome of their urgent need of learning for a cause. Their background and motivational forces work constructively in this regard. For the betterment of society and human life, it is essential to nurture this culture. The development of this culturally educated group will be an added advantage to Indian society. Highly qualified learners want to learn and set apex standards.

Objectives of Educational System:

The aim of educational system is to make a learner familiar with the subject with special reference to learner's overall personality development. For this purpose, the layered progression and designed structure for assessment of students from kindergarten to Higher education is structured and well-planned. In this regard a fresh attitude is required to look at current educational Indian system. According to Chalam, K.S, "Universities,

traditionally, seen as key cultural institutions to be responsible for public enlightenment. The 'commercialization' of higher education has placed considerable strain on its social mission. The oft cited Nehru's qualification for a university that stands for "humanity etc" need to be replaced with profit, market, manipulation, control, authority and so on. This will create challenges of uneven distribution of human capital and finds that it will allow some nations to take full advantage of new opportunities while others drift further and further."² Though it seems that it is affecting current educational scenario, it may be believed that good steps initiated by authorities will enhance the credibility of Higher Education in India which will set apex standards in near future.

Need of Interdisciplinary Studies:

As stated earlier, interdisciplinary studies is a must in Indian society. Lissa Lattuca maintains, "To untrained eye, the world of interdisciplinary or more accurately nondisciplinary."³ Thus, one must understand the basic concept of interdisciplinary study. It is a kind of study which one can undertake after getting specified educational qualification. The further or targeted study may not be related to the mainstream subject(s) that one might have learnt during possessing specified academic qualification. Currently, many universities are advocating trans-disciplinary studies. This move is welcomed.

The highly qualified educated Indians are tempted to learn for their personal and social benefits. Educated Indians, who are working, look at educational system from a different perspective. Distance education may be a good resource for them. But there are certain practical oriented courses, where training under supervisors is vital. In the study of medical science, expert's guidance, knowledge of pharmacy and proper diagnostic methods are required. At the department of distance education teaching by providing all these facilities

may not be available. It may even be not practical. Thus, distance education is not an ultimate solution to all issues related to higher educational system with special reference to interdisciplinary education in India.

Basically inter-disciplinary education stands for knowledge of allied subject(s) in the field of mainstream studies. The aim of any education system is to get proper knowledge of a subject. For this various layers of study are maintained. But through inter-disciplinary education, an opportunity may be provided to one to learn the subject(s) of one's choice.

An example of a daily life in this context may be helpful. If an academician wants to know about a disease, he will collect information from e-resources, books and other resources including discussions with doctors, counsellors, psychiatrists and pharmacists. (S)He may use this knowledge for his personal gains. He may also use it to sensitize the students or other related people. But, spreading and gaining knowledge through such a method is neither valid nor authentic and may not be suitable to all learners. Can our government come with a measure so that this academician may not only do research but also provide medicine to the diseased?

If a person studies a specified subject by completing certain procedure, the knowledge of that person will get upgraded. Interdisciplinary study will provide an auspicious opportunity to scrutinize, verify and certify this knowledge. It may be utilized for the betterment of society. This bottom-line of thought must be discussed seriously from a new perspective for the betterment of Indian society.

At initial stage this strata may look simple and even may not be that much impressive. But the basic idea, that if a person wants to learn something from the bottom of the heart after reaching to a specified level, will learn that subject with more focused

attention and seriousness. Daily dose of assignment or homework, which helps to spoon feed knowledge, may not be required for this group of learners. This type of learning will take place at a different level where only quality and interest matters. It may save the time of getting initial information in the classroom. Contrary to this through orientation or refresher program(s) or a specified training program(s) syllabus of three years may be learnt or taught in minimum period and in perfect style. Here the receiver and transmitter will communicate at an intellectual level and an excellent course of action will take place. It is important to note that only the interested person will initiate the process of learning and will learn till his intellectual ability demands.

The question of verifying the knowledge may remain a difficult task. But if proper steps are taken, assessment of answers and gained knowledge may be done systematically. It cannot be a big challenge. Specified method of knowledge testing will help. Even the stringent method of testing may be adopted so that the learner will not make any errors. As we all know, government of India has already designed a proper chain to grant permission to start any new business. These measures will take proper steps to control the quality of end results of interdisciplinary education.

Advantages of Interdisciplinary Studies:

To state the advantages of interdisciplinary studies, one may look at the current Indian educational scenario. K. B. Pawar maintains, "Along with the concept of quality, education has adopted from industry a variety of terms like quality control, quality assessment, quality audit and quality assurance. Unfortunately, in the literature of quality- issues in higher education these terms have often been used with overlapping connotations, and sometimes the same term has been used

with different meanings."⁴ It proves that higher education in India is going through a difficult state. It is responding to the move of interdisciplinary studies. Only those interested one will initiate the process of learning. Following are the advantages of interdisciplinary studies.

1. Maturity and substantial background of student will make learning focused.
2. Learner will easily adapt the culture of new subject(s).
3. Learner learns in specified environment.
4. Only interested and able will learn.
5. Knowledge will reach to targeted audience.
6. Cost of education hardly matters. And it may remain rational.
7. Experts will be able to match learner's level.
8. Teacher can point out limitations of learners and can negate facility of teaching-learning to unqualified or below average learner (if any).
9. Examinations can be conducted as and when required.
10. No hurry to get a degree as the learner wants to learn for a cause.

Disadvantages:

One cannot claim that interdisciplinary study is too perfect and flawless. There are certain disadvantages or challenges that occur in developing the culture of interdisciplinary studies. They may be enlisted as below.

1. Not suitable to all learners.
2. Cannot predict that all learners will learn till (s)he reaches to specified level.
3. New scenario of educational system is required.
4. Drastic changes are required in concurrent education system.
5. Learner with negative stances may learn for wrong reasons.
6. Specified faculty may not be available or interested.
7. Cost of learning may be more.

8. Learning in professional environment may not take place.
9. Learner may unnecessarily cross-question.
10. May be difficult for teachers to handle aggressive learner.
11. Difficult to maintain layered progression.

Challenges in Interdisciplinary studies:

In this research paper, we have already discussed the concept, advantages and disadvantages of interdisciplinary studies. Broadly speaking the following may be major challenges in interdisciplinary studies.

1. Lack of trained human resource.
2. Lack of infrastructure
3. Developing curricula that encompass need of learner and interdisciplinary learner.
4. Designing a chain of evaluation for interdisciplinary learner.
5. Considering future prospectus or challenges of interdisciplinary learners and learning.
6. Testing the status quo.
7. Sensitive matters related to age, experience and background of interdisciplinary learner.

Special study of interdisciplinary learning will add more to this list as the matters of

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each interdisciplinary study may remain distinct and diversified. But one must accept a fact that though there are certain challenges and disadvantages of interdisciplinary studies, interdisciplinary study is in vogue. E-resources and other modern resources are helpful in this regard. Above cited advances, disadvantages and challenges reiterate a fact that interdisciplinary study in Higher Education in India is not a simple task. Yet it is a must. It spreads awareness and may help the needy. The challenges are severe, but if the government and other authorities are convinced in this regard, they will upgrade Indian Education System for betterment of humanity, by using this tool. We must remember as B. Deka says, "The objectives of higher education are to promote welfare of individuals as to strengthen the nation."⁵

Conclusion:

Interdisciplinary study in Higher Education is a must in today's aura. It will prove multi-beneficial, if proper steps are taken to upgrade it by enhancing its credibility. This type of study will be in great demand in near future which will uplift human life.