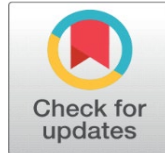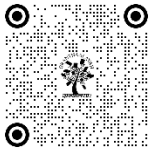# BLENDED LEARNING: A FUTURE OF INDIA'S HIGHER EDUCATION SYSTEM

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ABSTRACT

A Healthy democracy requires equal access to education for all citizens of the country. The impact of covid-19 pandemic on education reflects decades of neglects and failure of the government apparatus to reach various categories of disadvantaged populations. Covid-19 pandemic gave us a big chance to become digitally literate to host webinar and to get familiar with digital tools. Blended learning emerged as a solution to overcome the problem of teaching learning globally. Blended learning is a Combination of Both i.e. face-to-face learning and online learning. There are certain deficiencies in face-to-face learning hence Blended learning is the best solution over the face-to-face learning. The present paper discusses the concept of Blended learning, Need for blended learning in Indian higher education system and its implementation. Pros and cons of Blended learning and challenges in the implementation of it. The present paper also tries to explain that how blended learning is an approach that can be adopted for the bright future of Indian Higher education system.

Keywords: Blended Learning, Face-To-Face Learning, NEP-2020, Indian Higher Education System

1. INTRODUCTION

If the citizens of the country are not democratic by nature, then education must undoubtly play an important Role in the process of transforming people in to democratic citizen (cock and shorgar, 2006) without educated people, a democracy require equal access to education for all citizen of the country. Due to covid-19 epidemic, Teaching & learning process have been shift from face-to face learning to online learning. The impact of pandemic on education reflects decades of neglects and failure of the governmental apparatus to reach various categories of disadvantaged population including rural communities, urban poor, and women from unorganized sectors & socially backward Communities, (Nehal 2020) covid-19 pandamic gave us big chance to become digitally literate, to host webinar and to get familiar with digital learning tools (Dubey 2021), But the transition to blended learning can not be panacea for the educational system in India. Our education technology supplier face the challenge of creating accessible solutions for every student. On the other hand it is theoretically conceivable for students with limited flexibility and resource to get world class education using single internet connection through online learning This has Prompted the University Grants Commission for the implementation of India to submit fresh suggestions for the implementation of a blended learning strategy, UGC issued circular in 2021 mentioning that 60% classes should be run on offline mode where as 40% classes should be run on online mode. The concept note circulated by university grant commission argues that, this blended teaching and learning enhance student teacher interaction, enhance student learning outcomes and more flexible teaching learning environment among other things. The note also entrust a few other benefits such as increase opportunity for institutional

collaboration at a distance and enhance self learning from blended learning. Another claim is that blended learning benefits the teaching community as well. It shifts the role of teacher from knowledge provider to a coach, mentor and organizer, It will also enable teacher to have greater influence and effect on student learning. It has flexibility in assignment and evaluation pattern.

Due to the constant innovation in technology, the use of educational application of the computer, whose use in education is in its beginning taking various forms starting from using computer in education to the use of the internet in education and finally emerges as the concept of Blended learning, which depends on technology to provide the educational content to the learner in a good and effective method of blended learning, Since covid-19 importance of blended learning has increased. All the most all school and college have used the blended learning method.

The Objectives of the Research paper :-

Following are the main objectives of the research paper.

i) To Understand the Concept Blended learning.
ii) To Focus on the of problems of face-to-face learning.
iii) To know the pros and cons of blended learning.
iv) To focus on the challenges in blended learning.
v) To suggest way forward to strengthen Blended learning.

2. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This research paper is completely based on secondary data and information available from books, journals, research projects, published work and reputed websites.

3. REVIEW OF LITERATURE

As to write this research paper following literatures have been reviewed Clerk and myer (2006), stated that there is no exact or particular definition of blended learning and it may refer to different meanings for different people. In brief, blended learning is a type of education which is a combination of both models is traditional and distance education and makes use of all types of advanced technology. In other words, blended learning has come to be understood as a combination of offline class room teaching and online learning. Blended learning process are thus articulated by combining online learning and traditional approaches in various degrees.

Adarsh kumar, Rajlakshmi and Anand nayyar (2021) mentioned in their Research article that, The Blended learning practices is found to be very effective during covid-19 pandemic period Blended learning supports both synchronous and asynchronous models of learning in online and offline learning processes. According to them there would be several benefits to explore blended learning in different domains including engineering, medical sciences, arts,comerce etc. The literature analysis, show that There is an urgent need to do further research in this area, short term and long term effects of blended learning can be explored in detail. Other university professional are required to share their ideas and experience such that it would be helpful for new researchers to plan such practices in the future.

Byket akkoyunlu and merdem yilmazsoylu (2006),In their study they examines the students view on blended learning environment as well as their achievement level and frequency of participation to the forum. The result of study demonstrate that, the more students achievement level and frequency of participation to the forum raises the more positive view they express about blended learning environment. The highest score given to offline mode learning environment throughout the process of implementing blended learning , as mentioned above, the increasing positive view about blended learning approach.

In proportion to increasing frequency of participation to the forum emphasized the significance of interaction communication in the effectiveness of online learning. The study reveals that, the student whose achievement level is low, stated that they were not accustomed to using online environments underlines the importance of making student familiar with these environments through blended learning method before adopting a method which is a completely based on online learning and that of supporting online courses with face-to-face interaction.

 Dr.R.Jayanthi (2019) in her research paper 'A study about blended learning - its importance and concept' states that, "Blended learning is to be an integral part of higher education over the past decade, with increased availability of technology and network access". The use of blended learning environment has improved over a period of time. It provides students with time flexibility and improved learning outcomes. The blended learning offer the open platform for many students who can get through the physical and cultural barriers in the education. However, the amount of research done related to the design and use of blended learning is relatively small hence additional research is needed.

In particular, research is needed that will help the teachers to understated strength and weaknesses of method used in face to face and computer mediated instructional environments and know how to appropriately combine both types of instruction, despite initial hurdles and challenges, the future looks promising for blended learning adaption in the developing country like India. Alijani (2014), according to him an economics potential to grow is dependent in part on the performance of its educational system and if todays student are to compete successfully in tomorrows technology based job market, the educational system will need to be significantly restructured. Blended learning as seen in the recent years, has the potential to be method for achieving this restructuring, particularly because it is not only inherently creates more opportunities for college student to participate in individualized, one destruction on a daily basis, but it is also increases the allowance for credit recovery and advance placement opportunities for course student in need of such opportunities.

4. WHAT IS BLENDED LEARNING? AND WHY?

- Blended learning is an educational approach that Combine traditional or face to face instruction with online learning activated as well as ICT supported offline learning.
- Harriman (2014), define it as a type of education that Combines Various educational activities such as face to face learning to the classroom and the live e-learning.
- Khamis (2023) defined it as an integrated system designed to help the learner through each stage of learning with its Various forms within class room.
- Oxford Dictionary cites Blended learning as a style of education in which students learn via electronic and online media as well as traditional face to face teaching. (ciro:2010)
- The National education policy 2020 is and over acting policy from work for future. Education in India recommends that all educational institution, from primary to higher education should use Online and blended learning tools to deliver quality education efficiently and Virtual Collaboration platforms blended learning can help to overcome the hurdles of traditional face to face learning and Create more engaging, inclusive, and effective learning environment for student of all backgrounds and abilities.

5. ENHANCES THE LEARNING EXPERIENCE

- According to a survey Conducted by the national Centre for education Statistics,40 out of 100 students study and earn together some are doing jobs.
- One size fits all approach : face to face learning often relies on a standardized curriculum and teaching Methods that may not cater to individual learning style and paces and so failing to meet the individual needs of all the students.
- By Contrast, blended learning a more offers a more flexible, personalized and interactive approach to education that combines the benefits of face to fce instruction with online learning opportunities. By leveraging digital tools, Multimedia resources.
- Traditional mode of teaching learning can present several hurdles for both students and educators.

Some of the challenges of face to face learning

1] **LIMITED FLEXIBILITY:-**Face to face, learning typically follows a fixed schedule and location. Which may not accommodate the diverse needs and preferences of students.

2] **ACCESSIBILITY ISSUES:-**Face to face, learning may pose accessibilities challenges for students with disabilities or those living in remote or rural areas. Physical barriers, lack of transportation option and limited resources an hinder their ability to fully participate in traditional classroom settings.

3] **RESOURCE CONSTRAINTS:-**Traditional classrooms may lack access to modern technology, digital tools and online resources that can enhance.

6. NEED FOR BLENDED LEARNING IN THE INDIA HIGHER EDUCATION SYSTEM:-

NEP-2020 has given a rare glimpse showcassing what can be achieved through the transformation of education.NEP 2020 proposes to have multiple mechanism with check and balance of different aspects.The new NEP-2020 clearly states that it is need of time to take on a policy which is a progressive shift towards a more scientific approach towards education .The time has indeed come to recognize the fact that the student are the main beneficiaries and that efforts must be taken to make the system respond to their aspirations. In this line of thinking the new policy gives the acceptability of many modes of learning including that of face to face learning.

With emergence of digital technologies and the different mix of online and in person components,such as flip model,rotational model etc.Accordingly, blended learning is valued approach for realizing the policy vision.

7. QUALITY HIGHER EDUCATION INSTITUTIONS :- A NEW AND FORWARD VISION FOR INDIA'S

HIGHER EDUCATION SYSTEM :- significant use ICT for the higher education institutions of our country are important while implementing blended learning.Few of the ICT initiatives are discussed as below.

- **OER :-** Open educational resources (OER) refers to freely accessible openly licensed educational material in the context of blended learning using ICT initiatives. These resources can be anything from textbook to syllabus, lecture notes, tests, videos or animation. OER provides students and educators with access to wide range of educational resources reducing barrier to learning and promoting inclusivity.
- **MOOCS :-** mooc means for massive open online course (mooc) which is an online education platform offers a wide range of course that focus on large scale interactive and open access via web. Mooc aims to provide real time education with the help of videos, study material and online exams and also tries to make it more efficient than the real time education in class rooms by removing time & location constraints.
- **SWAYAM:-** Swayan is an online portal initiated by government of India and design to achieve the three cardinal Principles of NEP 2020 viz-access, equity and Quality, The objective of this effort is to take the best teaching learning resource to all margins of stude including the most disadvantaged.
- **NEP-2020:-** NEP-2020 aiming to increase the employment opportunities for creative multidisciplinary and highly skilled workforce.
- **HEERA:-** The central government is set to abolish the UGC and AICTE as regulatory bodied and replacing them with the one single education watchdog called HEERA or Higher education empowerment regulation agency. All these schemes will be more helpful to student to face the challenges of digital India. The potential of the students should be efficient enough to meet the fast changing & vibrant technologies.

8. THE PROS AND CONS OF BLENDED LEARNING:-

Blended learning, a combination of traditional face-to-face instruction and online learning, has emerged as a transformative approach to education globally. In the context of the Indian higher education system, there is a growing need for the integration of blended learning to address various challenges and enhance the quality and accessibility of education. This comprehensive discussion will explore the reasons why blending learning is essential for the Indian higher education system, highlighting its potential benefits and implications.

Blended learning offers a range of benefits, including flexibility, accessibility, personalization, engagement and cost-effectiveness. However, it also presents challenges related to technological issues, lock of face-to-face interaction, learning curve, quality control and equity concerns. Educators and intitutions must carefully consider these pros and cons when implementing blended learning initiatives to ensure a successful and inclusive educational experience for all learners.

THE PROS OF BLENDED LEARNING

i) Individualized support for students:-The important Advantage of blended learning is that it provide an opportunity of personalized instruction to every learner, which cater their needs.

ii) Global Knowledge :- students are exposed to knowledge shared by the instructors around the globe which cannot be learned in books. iii) Learners can access digital materials :- Digital materials include from digital libraries to online essays data bases at any time they need.

iv) BL provides more interactive educational Experience :- students have a chance to communicate with teacher using videoconferencing and other ways of communication like zoom, Google meet etc. this adds to better collaboration between tutor and student.

v) Parents have access to what their children are doing:- This provide better support, communication, and control over the process.

vi) BL gives learners significantly more time for learning:- With BL study can be extends beyond the college day.

THE CONS OF BLENDED LEARNING

i) The technology can be challenging rather than useful:-One of the key issues is the technological literacy which can be a real problem for teachers. Not all digital resource are reliable and easy to use.

ii) BL makes Teachers overburden:-There is a great deal of additional work for teachers involved in all stages of blended learning. They have to broader their horizons, pick the most beautiful syllabus and apply. Significantly more time and efforts to final the right balance between online and face to face learning.

iii) Students can experience cognitive load too:-with a great range of possibilities provided by the blended learning model, Teachers may start over doing with educational activities and content.

iv) Bigger issue:- Having a digital-friendly educational environment may cause more plagiarizing from online resources, moreover, there are a number of unreliable online resources that present false or ministerpreted fact.

9. NAVIGATING THE IMPLEMENTATION HURDLES OF BLENDED LEARNING

- As per all India survey on higher education -2021, out of 24796 total colleges in India around 61.4% colleges and 43% universities are established in rural areas. 80% colleges are managed by private management. Implementing blended learning:Planning for the financial aspects. Only big corporate are better placed to invest in technology. As per the All India survey on higher education-2021, GER in India is only 21.1% where as in advance countries like in USA it's 86% in Japan it's 59% and in Germany it's 30%.

- According to India internet report - 2023 Internet penetration rate in India is just 48.7% it is the biggest challenge before the Higher education institutions is that how to bring the rest of the learners under internet penetration.

- India will face a big challenges in following areas:

i) Access and equity
ii) Quality of education.
iii) Funding.
iv) Faculty
v) Employability

- Biggest challenge to achieve the target of government spending 6% of our GDP on education. Research and development investment in India just mere 0.69 percent of GDP whereas in some other countries like: US (2-8%), Israel (4.3%) and in south korea (4-2%).

- Isolated feelings will come in the minds of the learners when they will attend their lecture in online mode from their homes.

- Students participating in blended learning courses may occasionally hold unrealistic expectations.

10. WAY FORWARD.........

- Government should ensure equity in access to technology and bandwidth for all HEIs across the country at a free of cost.

- Large number of digital traioning programmes must be arrenge for the teaching community to make them understand about the importances of blended learning.

- Teacher student ratio in teaching-learnig process needs to be readjusted to implement BL effectively.

- This may require the appointment of greater number of teachers. Design of the curriculum should be decentralized and based on bottom-up approach.

- More power in such related policy making should be vested with the state government.

- Switching over from a teacher-centric mode of learning at school to BL mode at the tertiary level will be difficult for learners.

- Hence, the government must think of overhauling curriculum at the college level as well

- Finally periodical discussion, feedback mechanism and support services at all levels would revitalized the implementation of the NEP -2020, BL and lead to the actualization of the cardinal principles of education policy: access, equity and quality can be achieved.

- There would be adequate financial support by the government to the higher education Institutions to buy the expensive technology.

11. CONCLUSION

- Blended learning is an important part of the future higher education. Over the past decade, with the increase availability technological resources BL Environment has steadily grown.
- No barriers on blended learning.
- Use of technology can make the teachers and students techno savvy.
- Blended learning will not only develops the level of education but also develops the various forms of skills, such as communication and leadership.
- Despite initial problems and changes, the future looks promising for blended learning adoption in India. In fact, the current growth rates continue, India might soon pass some western countries in BL adoption.
- It provides learners time flexibility and improved learning outcomes.
- Implementation of Blended learning is a biggest challenge before the Higher education institution because they required huge amount to develop a similar course in traditional format.
- Blended learning is indeed an effective approach for achieving the policy vision. To phrase it differently, blended is suitable is suitable strategy for realizing the goals out lined in the policy.
- NEP-2020 has an implicit Blended learning policy. The ingredients are strewn all over the documents. There is need to stitch them logically. Together to create comprehensive and meaningful Blended learning.

CONFLICT OF INTERESTS

None.

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None.

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