

Education in Global Pandemic Globalized Era: Challenges and Opportunities

Dr. Unnat Patel

Associate Professor in English
Department of Humanity and Basic Science,
U. V. Patel College of Engineering
Ganpat University, Ganpat Vidyanagar-
Gujarat, India
Email:unnat.patel@ganpatuniversity.ac.in

Abstract

When the entire world is severely hit by Corona Pandemic (Covid-19), a new world order called 'New Normal' seems to have emerged from the ashes of difficult times. When all the facets of human life are facing a paradigm shift, education cannot remain unaffected by it. The growing death worldwide presents a very strong evidence of several stark realities. Education can undoubtedly act as a sure-cure for any challenge threatening the existence of the human race on this lovely earth. Moreover, globalization can act as a boon by providing an opportunity for the best of the brains to come together and make joint efforts in fighting out the challenges. Globalization facilitates technology exchange and knowledge sharing. Teacher is a central and important catalyst of a civilized society, and technology without the presence of a dynamic teacher is cripple. The present paper aims at discussing the challenges being faced by education in the era of global pandemic in globalized era and attempts to show how any challenge can be effectively meted out through tactful and sensible application of available resources and technology. The fate of any nation rests on its education and proper integration of technical inventions with talented teachers can do wonders. There is no recourse but to adopt and adapt the way education is disseminated.

Keywords: Corona, COVID-19, pandemic, technology, globalization, pedagogy, synchronous, asynchronous

Citation:

Patel, Unnat. (2000). Education in Global Pandemic Globalized Era: Challenges and Opportunities. *Ganpat University Journal of Applied Research In Social Science & Humanities*, 9 (2), 57-68.

Introduction:

To penetrate and dissipate these clouds of darkness, the general mind must be strengthened by education.

Thomas Jefferson

The noblest profession of imparting education is honored across the globe with equal reverence. Teachers play a decisive role in shaping and molding the young talent to make them competent and capable of facing any impending challenge. This is more so in the context of globalization and especially in the present difficult times of the corona pandemic. The words of Delor present this context quite pertinently:

Our vision of the coming century is one in which the pursuit of learning is valued by individuals and by authorities not as a means to an end but as end in itself...Teachers have a crucial role to play in preparing the learners not only to face the future with confidence but to build it with purpose and responsibility. The importance of the role of the teacher as an agent of change, promoting understanding and tolerance, has never been more obvious than today. It is likely to become even more in the twenty-first century as teachers are the prime participants in molding the characters and minds of the new generation. (22)

Various studies conducted by social scientists have proved a very strong correlation between education and development. Education is viewed as an effective tool to bring about complete social change in a given society and also as a means able to produce a robust workforce capable of competing in the present competitive global world. 'Corona Virus Disease' abbreviated as COVID-19 has emerged as the biggest ever threat affecting all the facets touching human life. Man is forced to live in the confines of lockdown and everything has come to standstill. Amidst all these complexities what

went on unstopping is education backed by strong global technology. However, academics kept moving even amidst complexities, it surely calls for goal-directed efforts to make everyone and everything compatible with the new quality standards. It is a challenge and need of the time, but not impossible.

Interlink of globalization and education:

The term “globalization” was first used in *Encyclopedia Britannica* in 1961. Globalization initiated with the spread of Western influence across the world. Globalization today is a trend visible in economics, commerce, technology, and also education. Globalization generates new demands and structures requiring new skills and knowledge. While every aspect of human existence is greatly influenced by the corona pandemic, there prevails an ardent need to analyze the state of education in the context of various challenges and opportunities.

Jones and Coleman state that no education system can survive and stay unaffected by globalization (221). It is a universal fact that very little work is done on the pedagogical implications of globalized tools of technology. There is a growing need to modify the policies and procedures designed to equip prospective teachers with the knowledge, attitude, and skills to perform their tasks effectively in the classroom, school, and community. Clinton rightly makes the point that the way globalization is conceived and the role one assigns to teachers concerning it will influence how education is structured. (42)

In recent years, much has been discussed regarding the linkages between globalization and education. The wide and wild spread of the Corona pandemic has proved that it is a time we have no recourse but to embrace the technological advancements for all our mundane and exclusive objectives. Smart phones and home computers have become the magic box. Online communication platforms have substituted the classrooms and executive meeting rooms wherein the giver and taker can transact from the comfort of their homes! Upskilling of the teachers to be efficient users of technology for their academic pursuits has become imperative. Ex-American president Bill Clinton rightly observed that every community should have a talented and dedicated teacher in each

of its classrooms. We have enormous opportunities and avenues available today to ensure a quality teacher with technical know-how in the 21st century if we recruit promising candidates into teaching and give them the highest quality training” (Darling-Hammond & Bransford 197). The time is here and now.

Role of education in shaping the nation:

Every nation modifies its education policies to meet the changing social and political conditions. The New Education Policy of 2020 stresses that skill development should be a priority agenda of education. It is a valid observation that the fate of any nation depends on the quality of its citizens; the quality of the citizens depends upon the quality of its education; the quality of education depends more than anything upon the quality of its teaching community. Marginson mentions that education has become a primary medium of globalization and an incubator of its agents (21). It is required that the focus of teacher preparation should be shifted from training to educate to making a positive influence on young minds of the classroom.

Globalization requires that teachers and teaching should be recognized like all other professions and should require rigorous training, acquisition of knowledge, and globally accepted skills for easy mobility of teachers across national boundaries. Holistic teacher building is necessary and therefore teachers are required to be better trained than taught.

“Daily, teachers confront complex decisions that rely on the knowledge of different things and the judgment that involves high stakes of outcomes for student’s future” (O’Sullivan 29). Teachers must be aware of how student learning can unfold in the context of development, learning differences, cultural influences, individual temperaments, interests, and approaches to learning.

Teacher performance is the most crucial input in the field of education. Whatever policies may be laid down, in the ultimate analysis these have to be implemented by teachers as much through their example. (“Challenge” 321). Unless there are capable and committed teachers in service, the education system cannot become a potential

instrument of national development.

The untrodden ways intensifying the challenges:

Before the current pandemic forced closures of educational institutions, higher education operated through a judicious blending of online and face-to-face learning. Now in a new world of social distancing, higher education has become completely virtual. This has posed a great many challenges often due to far less experience and fewer resources for teachers and students.

Educational institutions across India, barring a few, have always considered educational apps or digital learning as a supplementary tool and may have had difficulty in mainstreaming it mainly due to less awareness of its efficacy. Students from remote districts and those belonging to poor communities lack the infrastructure. The picture will change only after greater penetration of the telecom network and rolling out of higher bandwidth and connectivity. Further, it is also imperative to ensure that it should work on all devices and in any area.

Many countries are shifting to distance learning approaches through the use of technology to facilitate online learning. There lies a lot of risks because these approaches tend to be very solitary and didactic asking students to sit and quietly listen to the audios, watch the videos, read the documents, or click-through presentations. In the absence of the physical presence of the teacher, these forms might fail in securing intended success.

We would miss a lucrative opportunity if we don't capitalize on the situation that is imparting us the chance to exhibit empathy for each other. It is a time for the education sector to unite, forge connections across countries and continents, and share what works globally. Education is going to be digital in the foreseeable future, but in the absence of the right infrastructure and right policies, the discrimination would intensify. It is the need of time that proper contemplation, discussion, and deliberations should be ensured before some stand is taken. The physical infrastructure of academic institutions will have less impact on the quality of education

and thus directly on the cost of education. Review meetings, parent-teacher meetings, subject conferences will be location agnostic.

Virtual learning will impart more freedom to the students as they will be free to choose the course, institute, mode of learning, and examination style to earn the degree of their choice. All these steps will help strengthen the country's digital learning infrastructure in the long run. Covid-19 has only accelerated the adoption of technologies to deliver education (Sharma, 2020).

India is going to witness a 50% increase in students over the next 15 years and although it has many universities and colleges, only a few have the facilities to match this surge of students in the future. Online education could be a logical solution to accommodate this problem. The government of India, for the first time, is allowing Indian universities to offer online degrees, which previously was limited to foreign universities. Now, to encourage and widen access to higher education, this restriction has been lifted from 20% to offer 100% courses online (Lakshmanan, 2020).

Measures to make education compatible with globalization:

It should be well received that 'teaching is a global profession'. It is essential to grasp a global perspective of the profession as it is today, to make assumptions about it shortly, and to utilize the best thinking and instructional models available in the present times. As a result, teachers would need to acquire additional knowledge and skills, both general and specific, to be able to survive and be successful in the 21st-century school environment. Education has increasingly become important to the success of both individuals and nations. Growing evidence demonstrates that, among all educational resources, teacher's abilities are especially critical contributors to student's learning and consequently the success of a nation to advance in its economic, social, and political spheres. The global institutions have appealed to all the nations to work as a team, invent and implement user-friendly tools and platforms so that the wheel can keep moving. UNESCO's Assistant Director-General for Education, "We need to come together not only to address the immediate educational

consequences of this unprecedented crisis but to build up the longer-term resilience of education systems” (UNESCO, n.d.).

Competency-based Curriculum:

The competency-based curriculum represents an approach to instructions, which emphasizes the application of the knowledge in a manner, which may be observed or measured. A competency-based curriculum focuses on a comprehensive view of each course of study, which is delineated into its essential components listing of most important objectives to be mastered and competencies that every student should be able to demonstrate. A competency-based curriculum is designed to apply learning with an increased emphasis on higher-order thinking skills. Students are evaluated not only on knowledge but also primarily on their ability to perform tasks associated with knowledge acquired.

Quality of Education:

The standard of education will improve if all the teachers have a global perspective and are provided with professional development and appropriate support. Teachers need to be adapted to compete in the international sphere. The paradigm shift witnessed in education during the present difficult times of the corona pandemic is truly remarkable. It has posed a great challenge so far as the maintenance of quality in online education is concerned. In countries like India, good bandwidth, connectivity, and affordability of data have seriously aggravated the problem. Asynchronous and synchronous modes of imparting education need to be improved if the cardinal objectives of education are to be ensured, fulfilled, and realized.

ICT as an enabler for educational change:

Priestly argues that national education systems have been changed quite noticeably by the processes of globalization and these changes can be taken as the effects of and responses to globalization (126). In the technology-driven world, teachers should be active users of technology. The rapid development of technology and the Internet has brought an upsurge of technological tools and hence the inclusion of ICT in imparting

education is mandatory. As technology is endowed with an immense potential to innovate education, teachers need to modify their teaching methods.

The integration of ICT in education can happen in two ways:

1. Integration of learning ICT in general and applying ICT in education.
2. Integration of theories, pedagogic, and technologies within the framework of learning cultures.

Hence, ICT can bring about new opportunities for educators, because it can provide powerful support for educational innovations.

Creativity and Innovations in teaching and learning:

Creativity in education is not just an opportunity, but a necessity. Learning creatively is certainly a form of meaning-making. The generation of the 'New Millennium Learners' is characterized by multitasking, short attention spans, gaining information in non-linear ways(Pedro,2020). Teachers have to attract their interest and attention in a new way, and as a result, the development of creative approaches is called for (Simplicio, 678). The gap between the school and home is affecting learners' expectations and therefore a creative and innovative approach to learning and teaching is necessary. It focuses on three inter-related enablers for change: technologies, culture, and pedagogy. Technologies are already accepted by the young generation and it is being widely used by them. New pedagogies have to take into account what it means to be educated in our times, as the overwhelming presence of technologies in our lives brings about a change in the way young people and children learn and understand. A cultural shift is also required to promote values, which are not always recognized in a school environment, such as risk-taking, uniqueness, and originality. Teachers are key figures to implement change, but they need support to understand and accept creativity in their practices.

Dynamic teacher education and training:

For dynamic teacher education and training in the 21st-century globalized world,

teacher education and training institutions must design programs that would help prospective teachers to know and understand a wide array of things about teaching and learning and in their social and cultural contexts. If the 21st-century teacher is to succeed at this task, teacher education and training institutions must further design programs that transform the kinds of settings in which the experienced teachers teach and become competent teachers. Importantly, the teacher education and training institutions must take up the charge of educating policymakers and the general public about what it takes to teach effectively both in terms of knowledge and skills that are needed in the times of globalization.

Structure of a Globalised Teacher Education and Training Curricula:

Building strong modules of teacher preparation in the 21st century would require adequate and progressive knowledge content for teaching the subjects that the teacher would be required to teach. Globalization of education must be made to work for people. If it is to accomplish this, it should be modeled on the following six factors pointed out by the UNDP (1999):

1. *Ethics*: less violation of human rights
2. *Equity*: less disparity within and between nations
3. *Inclusion*: less marginalization of people and countries
4. *Human security*: less instability of societies and less vulnerability of people
5. *Sustainability*: less environmental destruction, and
6. *Development*: less poverty and deprivation

Learning can take place in different forms: formal, informal, and non-formal. Formal education takes place in formal settings such as schools, colleges, and universities while non-formal education includes agricultural extension, training programs for farmer and adult literacy programs, occupational skill training, youth clubs with substantial educational purposes, and various community programs of instruction in health, nutrition, family planning and the like. Informal education differs from both

formal and non-formal education in the sense that it is unorganized. It includes such processes by which a person acquires knowledge, skills, and attitudes from daily experiences at home, at work, at play; from the example and attitudes of family and friends; from travel; from reading newspapers and books; by listening to the radio or by viewing films or television.

Conclusion:

No county can live in isolation without seeking the impact of global trends on different aspects of life and this is more so for education. The changing times require that new avenues, new methodologies, and new techniques have to be developed, tested, and applied for preparing a better breed of tomorrow's citizens. Globalization of trade, commerce, industry, and technology has created a conducive environment for talented and insightful brains to come closer to contributing to making shining tomorrow full of optimism!

Works Cited:

Challenge of Education - A Policy Perspective. Ministry of Education: New Delhi, 1985.

Clinton, W. J., *Call for Action for American Education in the 21st century*. Washington DC: White House, 1996.

Darling-Hammond, L. and Bransford J., *Preparing Teachers for a Changing World: What Teachers Should Learn and Be Able to Do*. Jossey Bass Publishers: San Francisco, 2005.

Delors, J. "Learning the Treasure Within". *Report to UNESCO of The International Commission on Education for the 21st Century*. UNESCO Publishing, 1996.

Jones, P. W. & D. Coleman. *The United Nations and Education: Multiculturalism, Development, and Globalization*. London & New York: Routledge Falmer, 2005.

Lakshmanan, R. How is COVID-19 impacting online education. Retrieved November 06, 2020, from <https://www.investindia.gov.in/team-india-blogs/how-covid-19-impacting-online-education>.

Marginson, S. "After Globalization: Emerging Politics of Education". *Journal of Education Policy*, vol. 14, no. 1, pp. 19-31, 1997.

O'Sullivan E. "Finding Our Way in the Great Work". *Journal of Transformative Education*, vol. 6, pp. 27-32. 2008.

Pedro, Francese. "The New Millennium Learners: Challenging our Views on ICT and Learning". OCED-CERI. Retrieved November 02, 2020, from <http://www.oecd.org/dataoecd/1/1/38358359.pdf>.

Priestley, M. "Global Discourses and National Reconstruction: The Impact of Globalization on Curriculum Policy". *Curriculum Journal*, vol. 13, no. 1, pp. 121- 138, 2002.

Sharma, A. COVID-19: Creating a paradigm shift in India's Education System. Retrieved November 04, 2020, from <https://economictimes.indiatimes.com/blogs/et-commentary/covid-19-creating-a-paradigm-shift-in-indias-education-system/>

Simplicio, J.S.C. "Teaching Classroom Educators How To Be More Effective and Creative Teachers" *Education*, vol. 120, no. 4, pp. 675-680. 2000.

UNESCO. Combat COVID-19: Keep learning. Together we are on the move! Retrieved November 04, 2020, from <https://iite.unesco.org/combating-covid-19-together-we-are-on-the-move>