

# Need for Constructive Strategies in Indian Education

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## ABSTRACT

In the age of globalization, we talk of the Right to Education and Universalization of Education, but in reality, education has been turned into a commodity, that is proudly bought and sold. Students are the ‘easy to trap’ consumers these days. Education once produced intellectual national leaders like Raja Rammohan Roy, Dr. B.R. Ambedkar, Subhash Chandra Bose and many more, and they in turn took upon themselves the responsibility to build a modern, prosperous and powerful nation. The India of today is ironically grateful to Indian politicians who, instead of uplifting the standards of education to desirable levels and coping with the global demands, are contented to see the education sector grow as a source of infinite profit for their own selves. The quality of primary and secondary school education in India is not as per the global standards. The number of people waiting for quality education and availability of top class education has a massive imbalance. This makes India a strong target to feed private equity investment in educational sector. What is needed today is the introduction of a useful and constructive strategy of education such as the TQM approach as advocated by Professor W. Edwards Deming in the 1950s. The education sector needs to be developed with the support of the politicians, but with the supervision of the learned and intellectual visionaries. Students should not be considered consumers or commodities. They form the building blocks of the nation that need to be tended and nurtured meticulously for the future of the nation.

*Keywords: Indian education, innovation, strategies, students.*

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## INTRODUCTION

Indian education has a rich and ancient history dating back to the Vedic period. The Vedic gurukuls were the earliest form of organized education in India. These were usually situated in the houses of the teachers or gurus where students lived and learned under the guidance of their guru. The gurukul system emphasized not only academic education but also character building, acquisition of multiple skills and moral values.

The modern education systems in India were established after the arrival of the British in India. The British established institutions like Calcutta Madrasah, Hindu College, and Presidency College in the early 19th century and introduced western education. It resulted in the rise of a new class of Indians who were exposed to the western ideas of democracy, freedom, and equality. The education system also contributed to the rise of Indian nationalism as the educated Indians began to demand greater political rights and freedom from the British rule.

Post-independence, the Indian government started a massive program of educational reform that was aimed at expanding access to education and improving its quality. The government established several institutions of higher education like the Indian Institutes of Technology (IITs), Indian Institutes of Management (IIMs), and Indian Institutes of Science Education and Research (IISERs) among many others. The emphasis was on providing quality education to all sections of the society including the disadvantaged and marginalized sections.

As of now, the Indian education system is the third-largest in the world after China and the United States. It comprises a vast network of institutions that include universities, colleges, and schools that cater to the diverse needs of the population. The Indian education system has come a long way since its inception, and with the right policies and strategies, it has the potential to become one of the best education systems in the world. “Education as a planned endeavour, at a personal level on a small scale or institutional level on a large scale, aims at making children capable of



becoming active, responsible, productive, and caring members of society. They are made familiar with the various practices of the community by imparting the relevant skills and ideas. Ideally, education is supposed to encourage the students to analyse and evaluate their experiences, to doubt, to question, to investigate – in other words, to be inquisitive and to think independently” (NCERT 2007).

### **EDUCATION IN INDIA: THE NEED FOR CONSTRUCTIVE STRATEGIES**

Education has always played a crucial role in the development of any nation. It is through education that a society produces intellectual leaders who in turn contribute towards nation-building. In the age of globalization, education has become more significant than ever, with countries focusing on the Right to Education and universalization of education. However, in India, education has been turned into a commodity that is bought and sold for profit. This has resulted in the decline of the quality of education in India, making it a strong target for private equity investment in the educational sector. As our higher education systems have grown and diversified, there has been an increasing concern about the quality of academic courses, assessments and rankings of higher education institutions. However these comparisons tend to over emphasize research and a few other specific parameters, using them as a yardstick of institutional value. If these processes fail to address the quality of teaching, it is in part because measuring teaching quality is challenging (Hernard, 2008).

The quality of primary and secondary school education in India does not come close to international standards by any means. The lack of quality education has created an imbalance in the availability of top-class education, leaving a vast number of people waiting for access to quality education. It is important to note that education should not be seen as a means to make a profit, but rather as a tool for nation-building. The development of the education sector should be done with the support of politicians, but under the supervision of learned and intellectual visionaries. Our education requires an overhaul before it can meet international standards.

Indian education and the western education system differ in various aspects. Here are some points of comparison:

- 1. Curriculum:** Indian education system mostly follows a set curriculum that is determined by the government or the education board. In contrast, western education systems often have more flexible curriculums that allow for customization and specialization.
- 2. Teaching methods:** Indian education system relies heavily on rote learning and memorization, with teachers being the primary source of information. On the other hand, western education systems place a greater emphasis on critical thinking, creativity, and independent learning.
- 3. Assessment:** Indian education system places a lot of importance on exams and test scores, which determine a student's future prospects. In contrast, western education systems often use a combination of assessments, including projects, essays, and presentations, to evaluate a student's understanding and skills.
- 4. Cost:** In India, education is relatively inexpensive, with public schools and universities offering affordable education options. In the western education system, education can be costly, particularly in countries such as the United States, where tuition fees can be very high.
- 5. Access:** In India, access to education is a challenge in many rural and remote areas, with limited infrastructure and resources. The idea of equalising educational opportunities also lies in the fact that “the ability to profit by higher education is spread among all classes of people. There are great reserves of untapped ability in the society; if offered the chance they can rise to the top. A great deal of talent of the highest level is, in fact, lost by an inegalitarian system of education” (Balachander, 1986). Western education systems, on the other hand, generally have better infrastructure and more resources, making education more accessible.

Overall, the two education systems have their own strengths and weaknesses. While the Indian education system focuses on memorization and exam scores, the western education system prioritizes critical thinking and creativity. However, both systems have their own unique challenges and opportunities for improvement.

The decline of the quality of education in India needs to be addressed urgently, and constructive strategies need to be introduced to improve the quality of education. India, with its diverse population and a vast geographical area faces many challenges when it comes to providing quality education to its citizens. The urgency today is the introduction of constructive strategies in education, such as the TQM approach advocated by Professor W. Edwards Deming in the

1950s. This approach focuses on continuous improvement and customer satisfaction, which in the context of education, would mean focusing on the needs of the students and their overall development. Deming's 14-point approach to enhancing education can assist us in preparing for the social, political and economic crisis in the field of education (Deming 1986). It is essential to nurture students as they form the building blocks of the nation's future. While myriad issues need to be tackled, there are also innovative strategies that can be employed to enhance education in India.

### **STRATEGIES FOR ENHANCEMENT**

The first strategy is the use of technology. With the advent of smartphones and affordable internet, digital learning has become accessible to a large section of the population. Digital platforms and websites like BYJU'S, Khan Academy, and Toppr have made it possible for students to learn at their own pace and in their own style. This has the potential to revolutionize the way education is delivered and make it more inclusive.

Another strategy is experiential learning. This involves hands-on experiences, field trips, and project-based learning. It helps students connect with the real world and apply the concepts they have learned in the classroom. Organizations like Teach for India and Pratham have implemented this approach in their programs and have seen positive results.

In addition, the introduction of vocational education can be a game-changer. Instead of just focusing on academic subjects, vocational education can provide skills that are in high demand in the job market. This can help students become employable and contribute to the economy. The National Skill Development Corporation (NSDC) is one such organization that is working towards this goal. Collaboration between schools, communities, and industries is also an effective strategy. This can help bridge the gap between theoretical learning and practical application. It can also provide opportunities for internships and apprenticeships, which can lead to employment.

Lastly, the involvement of parents in their children's education can have a significant impact. Parents can provide support and motivation to their children, and can also hold schools and teachers accountable for their performance. Programs like Pratham's Read India campaign have involved parents in the education of their children and have seen impressive results.

### **CONSTRUCTIVE STRATEGIES**

There are numerous constructive strategies that can be introduced in Indian higher educational institutions to enhance the quality of education and overall student experience. Some of them are:

- 1. Project-based learning:** Project-based learning is a student-centered teaching approach that engages students in real-world problems and challenges. It allows students to develop critical thinking, problem-solving, and teamwork skills, which are essential for success in the professional world.
- 2. Flipped classroom model:** In a flipped classroom model, students are provided with pre-recorded lectures and readings before the class. During the class, students work collaboratively with their peers and teachers to apply their learning and solve problems. This approach helps students to become active learners and takes the focus away from rote learning.
- 3. Technology integration:** Technology integration in education can help students to learn at their own pace and in their own way. Tools like online learning management systems, e-books, videos, and online assessment tools can make learning more engaging and interactive.
- 4. Internship and Industry collaborations:** Internship and industry collaborations provide students with an opportunity to gain practical experience and apply their learning in real-world situations. Collaborating with industry partners can also help colleges to keep their curriculum up-to-date with the changing industry trends.
- 5. Soft skills development:** Soft skills such as communication, teamwork, leadership, and problem-solving are essential for success in the professional world. Colleges can introduce soft skills development programs to help students to develop these skills alongside their academic learning.
- 6. Mentorship and counselling:** Mentorship and counselling programs can provide students with guidance and support to help them navigate the challenges of college life. It can help students to develop confidence, resilience, and a sense of direction for their future career.

Incorporating these constructive strategies can help Indian higher educational institutions to provide a holistic education to their students and prepare them for the challenges of the professional world.

### **CONCLUSION**

The Indian education system has come a long way since its inception. From the ancient times, where education was mainly confined to gurukuls and religious centers to the present, where education has become a fundamental right of every citizen, the Indian education system has undergone numerous changes. However, it is important to acknowledge that there is still much work to be done. The system has its flaws and limitations, and there is a dire need for constructive strategies to be introduced to enhance the quality and accessibility of education in India. “By shifting the information transfer paradigm from teaching to learning, constructivism-based blended learning makes learners responsible for discovering, constructing, practising and validating the acquired knowledge in social collaboration with their peer group and teachers. As a result, the focus of the classroom shifts from a presentational format (i.e. lecturing and information dissemination) to one of active learning (i.e., discussion and debate)”(Mal and Adhya 2020).By implementing innovative strategies like flipped classrooms, technology integration and experiential learning;the higher education institutions in India can create a more engaging and inclusive learning environment for students. It is time for us to focus on the future and work towards a more effective and efficient education system that can help shape the future of our nation. We need to take a broader perspective for education. “In an active learning approach, learning is not only about the content but also the learning process. This constructive learning approach develops students’ autonomy and their ability to learn, moulding them into lifelong learner” (Sidharth 2023).

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