Leadership Attributes of a Teacher: Covid 19

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Abstract:

The paper examines the Leadership attributes of a teacher specially during Covid 19. First of all academic leadership is defined as its not similar to leaders in other areas. This space is quite different from the space for leadership in a corporate body or a public sector company. In the corporate world the leadership is focused on the demands of the shareholders while in a PSU it is accountable to the government and by extension, to the country at large. In academic leadership the stakeholders are the students, teachers, funding agencies, administrative staff and society sans frontiers. As such, in the Indian context, academic leadership is accountable to the country's constitution and to the democratic set-up, in which it functions. No wonder we consider academic leadership as one of the pillars of a strong democracy.

Keywords: Covid19, Pedagogy, Education, Higher Education Institute.

"Adversity is the first step towards prosperity. At the onset, masquerading (false show or pretence) contagion may cause regress, but progress will follow soon thereafter, coz' storms never last… do they ever?"

INTRODUCTION

Leadership attributes of teacher are very important. To understand that first of all lets understand who is considered an academic leader in right terms. The term academic leadership was first coined by Ramsden (1994) and referred to leadership in a lot of major tasks in "higher education" such as leadership in teaching, in research, in the capacity of goal setting and vision communication and inspiring others (Ramsden1994). Later on, with the blooming studies in leadership in organizations, definitions of leadership implied some notion of effective leadership.

Academic leadership is simply defined as Leadership in academic settings or academic institutions; as prevailing in contemporary environment.

This space is quite different from the space for leadership in a corporate body or a public sector company. In the corporate world the leadership is focused on the demands of the shareholders whereas in a PSU it is accountable to the government and by extension, to the country at large.

In academic leadership the stakeholders are the students, teachers, funding agencies, administrative staff and society sans frontiers. As such, in the Indian context, academic leadership is accountable to the country's constitution and to the democratic set-up, in which it functions. No wonder academic leadership is seen as one of the strong pillars of democracy.

Academic leadership is critical in "higher education" because it has a huge impact on the learning quality of students (Ramsden, Prosser, Trigwell, & Martin, 2007). It is also complex and challenging. Many academicians (e.g., Academic Coordinators), may not see themselves as leaders in the traditional sense. This is frequently the result of lack of formal authority or line management over other academicians that deliver the course / program. However, leadership is also about inspiring individuals without necessarily using force or power. Through their work, leaders need to be able to *influence, motivate,* and *inspire* others to follow.

As Academic Coordinators and as teachers, we together; hold this collective responsibility. We must build relationships and use our influence to get our peers and students to deliver on program outcomes and quality. In other words, as Academic Coordinators we must consider ourselves leaders in the roles we respectively occupy.

THE COVID 19 PANDEMIC AND ITS FALLOUT
The fallout of the COVID 19 PANDEMIC; has been severe to say the least. Other than the loss of life of 4,80,000 plus worldwide and still counting, COVID 19 is likely to change the World Order and the way people live and conduct themselves, at least in the near future.

COVID-19 Every element of daily living throughout the world has been affected. It is "one of the world's most" serious and unpredictable public health disasters in recent memory. It is "contagious and fatal, hitting the elderly, children, and people with chronic underlying disease disproportionately" (WHO, 2020). It has already infected millions of people in 192 nations who went into lockdown at different times practicing social distancing and self - quarantine to "flatten the curve of nationwide transmission"; in crowded community settings like schools and colleges, social distance has already been shown in modeling studies to reduce the spread of the influenza virus (Zviedrite, Ahmed, and Uzicanin, 2018).

As we all know, the COVID 19 PANDEMIC has hit the Education sector like never before; with Schools, Colleges and Educational Institutions at large being closed down till the beginning of 2021; to ensure safety of all stakeholders and curb the transmission of the virus. This impacted 99.9 percent of world's student population, the teachers, their families, and the support systems with apparent economic and social consequences.
UNESCO estimates "that over 850 million children and youth – roughly 80% of the world's student population – had to stay away from schools and universities due to the COVID 19 PANDEMIC". Nationwide closures are in force in more than 110 countries and local shut-downs in many others. This represents more than a "doubling in the number of learners prevented from attending educational institutions, with further increases are expected" during this COVID 19 PANDEMIC.
The adverse impacts of closures are difficult to overstate and many of them extend beyond the education sector. UNESCO has compiled a shortlist of these impacts to help countries anticipate and mitigate problems. They include:
• **Interrupted learning:** The disadvantages are larger for disadvantaged students, who have fewer educational opportunities.

- **Unequal access to digital learning portals:** Lack of access to technology or decent internet connectivity is a barrier to "continuing education, particularly for students" from low-income families.
- **Social isolation:** Schools/Universities "are hubs of social activity and human interaction". When they close, "many miss out on social contact that is essential to learning and development".
- **Parents unprepared:** When schools/Universities closed suddenly no one was prepared for home and distance learning.
- **High economic costs:** Lockdown to stop the spread of virus resulted in stoppage of movement and close down in a lot of sectors in economy which resulted in job losses, decreased productivity, people moving back to their native places which resulted in wage losses and income losses.

However, life must go on, and the process and cycle of education cannot be stopped or stalled. In a volatile, uncertain, complex and ambiguous situation; that has arisen from COVID – 19; in response, academic leaders moved their related and instructional activities online as a feeling of immediacy spread across the country. Fast-moving institutions—especially those with shared leadership models—decided to switch to remote learning because it offered more flexibility, creativity, and teamwork.

As such; the focus has now shifted to contactless modes of teaching; such as using the online mode; conducting virtual classrooms; holding webinars; online video sessions etc. However; these" methods have several limitations" and pose different challenges; which need to be overcome; as not only COVID 19 is here to stay; atleast for the near future; but also because now the "Government policies are also encouraging online education "so as to overcome the constraints of limited educational facilities available for the ever growing education seekers; as also to make education more inclusive.

The spotlight is now fairly and squarely on the role of "Academic Leadership in Higher Education during and after the COVID 19" PANDEMIC . . . .

ACADEMIC LEADERSHIP IN THE COVID - 19 PANDEMIC CONTEXT

In conventional terms Leadership can be defined simply as the act of influencing others to think and act in certain ways. However, this definition applies for normal times; but is not dynamic enough to go far enough to capture what is really needed; to lead others in times of crisis situations; such as the present one posed by the "novel corona virus".

In such a situation; I take leadership, to mean the disruption and consistent review of the status quo in order to continuously improve, the lives of people.

Let us examine the concept of Academic Leadership as applicable to the ***present COVID – 19 ridden times.***

➢ There is no such thing as total academic leader.

➢ However, Leaders that have the "flexibility and adaptive capacity" to learn and change as a result of managing a crisis "will be able to respond to current and future issues more effectively and with less" effort, and may be the ideal "allostatic leader" for our academic institutions; looking forward.

➢ The "ability of a leader to adapt and evolve" in the face of extremely heated 'crucibles' is a critical component of good leadership.

> ➢ **By committing to "these leadership best practices, academic leaders will emerge from the crisis situations, such as the one posed by the present COVID – 19; to rebuild, with their credibility and brand untarnished; and perhaps even enhanced".**

Faced with "the novel corona virus" pandemic, academic institutions throughout the whole world including India; have "made the strategic decisions" to transit to distance learning.

The disruption to most peoples' daily lives has been drastically disrupted —and perhaps "one of the most dramatic shifts was education's move to a virtual setting". Higher education has been offering more online learning options even before the current pandemic prompted school closures, even while the old model continued to emphasize in-person instruction. But in this new socially isolated society, "higher education has become completely virtual". Concurrently, educational establishments have had to promptly adjust to an internet model, frequently possessing significantly less expertise and resources for both instructors and learners.

For all stakeholders it was a serious adaptive work which is stressful since many lack necessary digital infrastructure and technical knowhow; particularly in view of the fact that "the country was not prepared for a situation" like the present crisis. Having got caught up with an un-anticipated explosive situation; the changeover will not only be time consuming but will be fraught with difficulties and obstacles; which will need to be overcome. Some stakeholders may need to drastically alter their attitudes, values, and beliefs in order to transition to online course delivery (Heifetz & Laurie, 2001). Some of the faculty and students were "disgruntled that they were not consulted" and the problem was quite serious in India where plenty of students and teachers moved to their villages during the vacation of Holi festival, and were subsequently caught up in the lockdown phase; with little access to internet facilities and books. During this whole corona crisis; teachers have become a very important link between students; other academic staff and the society as such.

Let's us discuss the important LEADERSHIP ATTRIBUTES OF TEACHERS DURING AND BEYOND THE COVID – 19 CRISIS.

What education industry needs during and beyond COVID-19 is a combination of the 'Ethos of a Leader', the 'Attitude of an Innovator', and the 'Agility and Vision of a Captain'.

1.1 Awareness: Awareness is a state of consciousness. It is the ability to recognize oneself, others, events and situations in real time. During the corona crisis it is realized that instead of students it was the faculty which needed to have a whole new tool box to deal with the COVID crisis, as the faculty members needed to familiarize themselves with new sophisticated and advanced teaching and learning tools. As such, majority of them reacted quickly by learning the new skills swiftly and assembled online course materials, which may not be perfect; but kept the learning going.

1.2 Ability: Ability is the capability to lead; which is a function of the following:
•   Ability to communicate
•   Ability to resolve conflicts
•   Ability to solve problems and make decisions

1.3 The Communicator's Integrity and Credibility: In a crisis, the leader need to be credible, so the message delivered can be viewed as credible. Academic leaders have the power to inspire their peers,

staff, and students by articulating a clear, logical, and realistic shared vision for the institution once the crisis has passed. Creating a compelling future vision is the process of "visioning," which is a dynamic and cooperative process (Ancona et al., 2007). 1.d **Trust**: It is another factor to build a good relationship with students and among colleagues to bring in transformation required in the time of corona crisis. Teachers must be real, practice judgment-free active listening, be open to suggestions and criticism, express their opinions honestly and from the heart, all the while fostering psychological safety. The link "between students, faculty, and staff will be strengthened by making relationships during a crisis"; this is a "investment that will be rewarded in full", once the crisis passes, since "relationships forged in a crisis by meaningful engagement can become long-term and consequential when the crisis subsides" (Kezar et al., 2018).

1.4 Calmness: In a crisis like this, teachers who remain calm while "inquiring, advocating and connecting with their peers and students" without being judgmental can bring in many transformations required for the mutual benefit.

1.5 Flexibility and Adaptability: All those teachers who are flexible and quick to adapt the changes are really helpful to their students, colleagues and other staff during crisis.

1.6 Passion: Effective leaders believe passionately in their goals. They have a positive outlook on who they are, and they love what they do. Their passion for life is a guiding star for others to follow, because they radiate promise!

1.7 Honesty: Leaders convey an aura of honesty in both their professional and their personal lives.

1.8 Dedication: The effective leader is dedicated to his or her charge, and will work assiduously on behalf of those following. The leader gives himself or herself entirely to the task when it is necessary.

1.9 Charisma: This may be the one attribute that is the most difficult to cultivate. It conveys maturity, respect for your followers, compassion, a fine sense of humor, and a love of humanity. The result is that leaders have the capability to motivate people to excel.

1.10 Resourceful: If teachers are resourceful and open to new ideas during difficult times like corona pandemic, technology helps to change classrooms, and teacher's openness to new ideas will improve the way students absorb and retain information. They also need to know how to use the resources they have to the best of their ability—if they aren't sure, ask someone who is aware of, take an online course. Get the answers you need; others around will be benefited from this type of leadership mentality.

1.11 Listening: Leaders Listen! This is the most important attribute of all, listen to your followers.

1.12 Stress management: In times of crisis, everyone experiences high levels of stress. As a result, a"cademic leaders who can pace the essential adaptive work are able to control both their own and everyone else's perceived" levels of stress (Heifetz & Laurie, 2001). Academic leaders who exhibit humility, consideration, and intuition are the most effective in managing the stress experienced by all

stakeholders. Consequently, they will enjoy the unwavering support of these stakeholders both during and after the crisis.

1.13 Empathy: A leader's tough empathy (Goffee & Jones, 2000) is also important in a crisis. People come first before anything else. It is wrong, in my view, to do everything that protects the privileged first and then to think of ad hoc solutions for the less privileged.

1.14 Agility: Leaders during and in the post Corona scenario have to be 'agile' and inspire others involved to overcome the crisis together. At this moment it's very challenging to deal with education where every student has an aspiration that is embedded with hope and trust, and each of them as a primary stakeholder is unique in his/her strengths and challenges. It is the job of institutions to nurture focused learning in response to the student's expectations, irrespective of ongoing disruptions. Agility of leader should help education during and beyond corona crisis to harness the creativity and innovative minds of students. In fact the entire model of education needs to undergo a transformation – in terms of content, pedagogy, technology, and above all the mindset under an agile leader.

As Corona's experience has already pushed us in a chaotic world of education, the solution cannot be in the form of one-size-fits-all. In addition to digital transformation, institutions must harness agile educational leadership to move fast, and adapt to situations as they come along. Agile leaders can help educational institutions to be flexible and withstand any crisis in the future. It's a long-drawn exercise that must begin today.

The education industry too needs leaders like Winston Churchill who was innovative and inspired people to collaborate and overcome the predicament together.

1.15 Articulate: While it is "important to have a vision" for the institution, it is not enough. In order to make the whole institute work towards achieving the vision, it is imperative that the vision is articulated in such a manner that makes every stakeholder work towards achieving the vision. He should have the capability to persuade, convince and paint a picture of the future that is considered as desirable to everyone. This is no mean task.

2.1 Vision: To reach a goal, one should first know "what the goal is". And if that goal is in the future, the leader should have the capability to imagine the goal, perceive it and then make plans to achieve it.

2.2 Academician: An academic leader's words carry no credibility unless he is 'one of us'. When you consider leaders like General Patton or Mahatma Gandhi, one of the main reasons why they have "credibility was that they came from the ranks". People whom they led could easily relate to them. When that happens, the passion, dedication and commitment to a cause naturally surfaces. Anybody from outside that circle will be seen as a leader thrust from above and will be treated like a 'foreigner'.

2.3 Team player: While leadership thrusts major responsibilities on a person, it is "important that the leader" carries himself as a 'first among equals'. He should not create walls and boundaries between organisation layers. He should be always available, open to suggestions and should gladly welcome

opposing views. It is through discussion and debate that useful knowledge evolves. A follower is more likely to respect an open and democratic leader and hence contribute positively to growth. If the leader is dictatorial, the "followers are likely to show outwardly" that they are following orders, but over a period of time, they become apathetic. This is counter-productive to the goals of the organization.

2.4 Lead by example: The leader has to be a role model to everyone. People will believe in people who lead by example. Leading by one's own behavior is the greatest message that one can give. Not leading by example leads to loss of credibility.

2.5 Courage of conviction: A leader may not be able to achieve anything, unless he truly believes in the goals that have been set. Once he believes in them he should have the courage of conviction to convince other stakeholders about the path to be followed. If he wavers or has doubts about the goals, it will send confusing signals down the organization.

2.6 Clear Communication: The current Covid-19 situation — described both as a pandemic as well as an "infodemic" — requires leaders to cut through the noise to identify and address the most critical issues at each point. In a crisis, leaders should be in constant communication with all relevant parties (Edmondson, 2020). However, they must also be aware that the means of communication matters as much as the content of the message conveyed to stakeholders. Multiple channels of communication should be employed because information is vital (Robbins & Judge, 2018. The choice of "communication channel selected by leadership should also consider stakeholder preferences" also. While students, "many of whom are millennials, may prefer to receive updates via a variety of social media platforms" (or text message), relatively lean communication channels, "faculty and staff may prefer updates from leadership via email".

2.7 Articulate: While it is "important to have a vision for the institution", but its alone is not enough. In order to make the whole institute work towards achieving the vision, it is imperative that the vision has to be articulated in a way that makes every stakeholder work towards achieving the vision. He should have the capability to persuade, convince and paint a picture of the future that is considered as desirable to everyone. This is no mean task.

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2.10 Power of teaching and learning: Perhaps the most important trait of being an educational leader is believing in your students and the power of education. If you don't believe in your students or your colleagues, then everyone is doomed for failure. It's vital to believe in what your institution is trying to accomplish each and every day, and to convey your enthusiasm for change, your own motivation to make things better, and your confidence in those around you. Your words and actions directly impact morale—show others your passion for education, and they'll feel it too.

2.11 Connection with the people: It's one of the crucial quality that how teachers connect with people in crisis i.e. students and their parents, their own colleagues and administration in the time of crisis. When confronted with adaptive challenges, a leader who is effective possesses qualities like accountability, trustworthiness, and integrity, among others. But probably most important of all during a crisis is mental stability and emotional intelligence, which enable a leader to prioritize the needs of others over their own (Doraiswamy, 2012). When faced with the "current brand-new coronavirus pandemic", administrators have to rapidly get over any remaining normality bias and assess the fact that students, professors, and staff are actually facing significant challenges in their daily lives.

2.12 Commitment: For leaders, the "one thing" that leads to maturity is the fully aware recognition that one's decisions make a difference, both positively and negatively, in the lives of others, and that any attempt to solve a problem might have a decided negative impact on some, while helping others.

2.13 Patience: It is the key to solve every problem big or small and it's more so in time of crisis like corona pandemic. Patience is required to calm down the anxiety of students' parents and peers. Students and their "parents are very worried about the future", so one needs to be patient to listen to them and suggest some solutions. May be "they don't like those solutions" but they will like that teacher listened to their problem.

2.14 Guiding vision: Successful leaders have the fortitude to stick to their principles in the face of setbacks and setbacks. They also know what they want to accomplish. A competent leader establishes realistic objectives.

2.15 Opportunity in Crisis: How to convert a crisis into opportunity is best done by the teachers. All of them who were not digitally literate beyond email, wtsup and facebook trained themselves in google class room google meet and other apps like this to reach their students, conduct various programmes in the college and universities. They see it as a huge opportunity to train themselves to these new mediums may not be out of choice but out of compulsion as the corona seems to be a long race instead of sprint.

2.16 Plan Beyond the Crisis: Crises tend to consume leaders in the here and now, and sometimes understandably so. Organisations rarely move "back to the status quo" after a crisis. More "often than not, organisations discover that new structures and systems need to be put" in place in the post-crisis period.

2.17 Constructive Engagement: Create "opportunities for constructive engagement with other" organizations. The desire to outsmart others and to be seen as the most successful creates self-imposed solitary confinement which rarely breeds success, especially in the context of a global pandemic.

2.18 Leading by examples: As a teacher one has to do what he/she expects from students. If you expect a respect, then one needs to give respect to students as well. Listen to their problems and find solution if you want them to do accordingly. Try to find solution to the problem; don't find problem to solutions.

2.19 Appreciation: It's one of the "most important quality of a leader in a crisis" situation. Teachers need to appreciate their students and peers attempt to keep working and doing efforts to do better every day. We need to tell students that situation is not difficult but a bit more challenging and we are together in it. We are a team and without your effort we can't be successful. We did good last week despite of some problems and we are going to improve upon them and overcome the challenge. Surely students will be more than interested to help you out in finding the solution. There is no harm in appreciating them and taking their help as they are more pro with recent development in technology.

2.20 Non-binary approach: Leaders who don't believe in either white or black but do believe that there is a lot of grey areas too are more successful in crisis management. Like you are better off if you tell them there is a lot between excellent and useless. There are plenty of examples around that average student turned out very successful in their carrier options.

2.21 Story telling: Why do we remember great leaders ?? They have a skill to relate things with great stories. Teaching any subject become interesting when you relate it to story and in this pandemic this skill will be greatly appreciated by students.

Last, but perhaps its crucial that leaders work on their energy, to be able to function at their best through this time. Focusing on their "physical and mental well-being, spending time with their families and making efforts to recharge will all go a long way" in building capacity to run what is increasingly appearing to be a grueling marathon over a short sprint.

MAPPING THE WAY FORWARD . . . IN THE QUAGMIRE CALLED COVID – 19 PANDEMIC

Before the COVID – 19 PANDEMIC struck the World; only a few dedicated Open / Distance Learning institutions were approved.

However, in the COVID – 19 PANDEMIC era, due to the pressing need of the traditional universities to continue to be engaged in educational activities with their respective students, many traditional universities have switched and more are switching; to Distance Learning and Online mode of education. This shows flexibility on part of the policy makers, to adjust to the ever-changing scenario of the COVID - 19 PANDEMIC.

The following guidelines are suggested to make the switch over to the Online Learning mode, much easier and efficient.

1. Propagate and make Distance Learning and Online mode of education wide spread and accessible to all students, and conduct the classes online; based on the proviso that NO student should be left disadvantaged and deprived of education. All institutions and the traditional universities in

particular, should adopt use of "Information and communication technology (ICT) tools such as computer ,cell phones ,cell phone towers, video conferencing, software, radio, television , laptop" etc. so that no learner is left behind or deprived. These guidelines will make the switch over to the Online Learning mode, much easier and efficient.

2. Frequent surveys need to be carried out to "identify and evaluate the impact" of the strategies, and changes to the policies and procedures. This "would allow for necessary" adjustment; changes and fine-tune the strategies, policies, and procedures in a timely manner.

3. It is necessary to be in "constant communication" with all stakeholders, as the Academic Institutions may have to take emergency policy decisions to adapt to the national policy changes and directives. The University leaders may also have to get the staff to quickly make the necessary academic decisions that impact the students as also "address any concerns that the students" may have.

4. Specific guidelines need to be "formulated and communicated to all stakeholders" pertaining to alternative ways of teaching, including the use of ICT mediated learning such as online learning. The academics and especially the ICT staff must ensure that the ICT infrastructure would be able to handle the immediate migration to online teaching and learning.

Several Questions; such as the following; need to be addressed:

◆ How will you teach? Synchronous or Asynchronous. "**Synchronous** learning is online or distance **education**" that happens in real time, "whereas **asynchronous** learning" occurs through "online channels without real-time" interaction. An important question is will hybrid learning models are going to include a blend of both **asynchronous** and **synchronous** learning?

◆ How will students engage? Self-managed learning, discussion forum, groups?

◆ How will you communicate? Email, WA, Facebook, etc.?

◆ How will you assess the learning? Online, assignments, take-home exam, etc.?

In making these decisions; to enable move over to Digital education; for traditional universities and other academic institutions, it is "important to remember" that this is only a 'Band-Aid' solution. It will take time to learn how to teach online effectively – it's not an instantly transferable skill. Developing "effective online learning resources is not something" that can happen overnight either. Universities that are now good at Online Education and have robust systems for Digital Education; have taken years and considerable financial investments; to attain that status.

Central to the success of crisis management of this magnitude to the Higher Education institutions is the absolute need to communicate with each and every key stakeholder.

It is vital to :

• Assess the situation efficiently and accurately at all times to make informed decisions.

• Create trust with all stakeholders by establishing a specialized communications team.

• Map out potential responses in advance to changes to the policies, procedures, rules that impact especially on staff and students in particular.

• Make use extensively of social media and internet and all other forms of media to ensure the right messages are sent to the right people.

• Be compassionate at all times during a crisis; which is of great importance to ensure the decisions are as humane and understanding as possible.

• Learn from others as using external advice and support will save on money, time and effort.

We are still in the midst of the COVID - 19 PANDEMIC; which shows no signs of abating. In many countries, it is yet to peak. This pandemic will have an epoch effect on mankind. It is already making us ask fundamental questions on what matters most to us. I believe it will also have a big impact on how we learn and teach. We will see greater use of technology-enabled learning and teaching by Universities, schools and even corporate training. The successful will be ones that understand that it takes a systematic and systems approach to technology-mediated learning and teaching to make paradigm shifts. COVID-19 has exposed the limitations of our present systems and policies; largely because the present situation is unprecedented and none had fathomed that such a crisis could ever hit mankind. The fact is that we were caught unawares and therefore had to scramble to find some ad hoc solutions for the emergent situation; as millions of students across the globe were driven out of their university spaces, and professors were confined to their homes. As we "may not be able to go back to" the familiar face to face teaching in the classrooms very soon; for which we are largely equipped and trained for; our new normal in the near future and in the long run; will include substantially; this online mode of learning.

In the pre covid-19 era; three types of education system already existed: 'Gurukulam' system (one master to a few pupils), the 'traditional university' system (one to many learners) and 'distance learning' (one to very many learners across the spectrum). However, the COVID-19 has given rise to the new, 'total technology-mediated' education system; which can appropriately be termed as the fourth education system.

Distance learning has been in place for more than a decade. According to the All Indian Survey of Higher Education (AISHE) Report of 2018-19, the Ministry of HRD, total enrolment in higher education is estimated to be 37.4 million. Distance enrolment constitutes about as abysmal 10.62% of the total enrolment in higher education.

Although there is plenty of information available on learning at different platforms like MOOCs(Massive Open on line courses), Swayam Prabha, Virtual Labs, FOSSEE, etc.; the fact remains that there is still no spike in digital learning; because of several reasons like 'abysmal completion rates in the digital higher education' system; Non-existent rigor of assessment; Non-establishment or non-transparency about improvement in knowledge, application and competency in learners; Non-contextual delivery a basic factor in success of higher education; it influences the learning outcomes. Faculty in a 'classroom setup can size-up' and deliver the class; One-size-fits-all delivery; Practitioners trying to just 'transpose classroom to the digital' medium, which is causing many problems; Doing "live" classes may not bring in efficiency or effectiveness; Taking a concept all the way to application or higher-order thinking is missing;

COVID-19 pandemic has decidedly accelerated the future of remote learning and many 'positive outcomes' are expected in the future for upskilling teachers and students, as most of the constraining factors will be overcome; thereby heralding a new era of the sustainable and meaningful learning ecosystem.

Its impact can be considered effective only if several conditions of online learning are adequately met.

a. Online learning is NOT a video lecture and e-book library that "converts class notes" into PDFs. To make learning exciting and engaging, high quality digital learning content must be contextualized and 'bite-sized'. This requires a rare skill set that few organizations in the world possess. Universities must "work with such organizations to ensure the success" of their digital pivots.

b. The material covered in the classroom will be supplied online, but through the use of technology as an intermediary. Blind replication is a horrible concept; it necessitates a thorough grasp and application of learning science and digital pedagogy. Every member of the teaching staff must be equipped with this expertise, or else collaboration with experts is the only option.

c. Learner groups in classrooms are often heterogeneous. The top teachers and subject matter specialists in classical education derive a content-context cluster as a mean of the class' combined aptitude and prior knowledge. The teaching-learning transaction is thus tailored to that built mean. This will not and cannot function in the context of online learning. Institutions must devote as much work to the context for the different learner profiles as they do to the content, and incorporate it into program design.

d. New technologies, such as artificial intelligence and deep learning models, can assist us in developing personalized learning strategies and approaches. "Higher education institutions must adopt these swiftly in order to address" the shortcomings of present digital higher education.

e. Online learning is an amalgamation of several educational paradigms rather than a single one. And it is a specialized learning science that combines learning psychology, behavioral analytics, content delivery, and assessments to gauge and measure the journey and progress of individual learners. Working with experts and 'hand-stitching' a delivery system is essential.

f. Put learning science, and not technology, in the forefront. There are plenty models being created today seek to use technology and tools as a panacea and equate online 'delivery' with online 'learning'. The former is teacher-centric, and the latter is learner-centric. 'Learning' is about gradually inducing changes in learner's actions and behavior. The learning process, in incremental steps, induces change in thinking and mental models of the learner through deep understanding and conceptual strengthening. After each learning episode, the learner will be able to apply the acquired knowledge in practical situations in life, profession, or workplace. Each teaching faculty needs to be massively re-trained and oriented for online teaching-learning mode. While they could be content experts or great classroom teachers, they need to place equal importance to 'learning sciences in digital media'.

g. Of course, even in the "post COVID-19 era, 'offline or conventional education models will not become obsolete", they will survive. However, 'blended learning' (a combination of classroom and online modes) will be the norm. Institutions and teachers will 'blend the two judiciously' according to the context and the content.

To sum up, the newly identified requirement for mature online education models can be met successfully. by making these "Queen sacrifices"!

- Faculty to let go off their 'existing practices of transposing classroom to online medium' without applying the 'science of digital learning'
- Universities to let 'go off their academic know-all stance and become willing to collaborate with digital learning specialists to train their teachers and re-design higher education' for the newest online education world.

Leaders in the post Corona scenario have to be 'agile' and inspire team members to overcome the crisis together. The education industry too needs leaders like Winston Churchill who was innovative and inspired people to collaborate and overcome the predicament together.

SURVEYS

A. STUDENTS PERSPECTIVE: Expectations from Teachers during the COVID – 19 PANDEMIC; arising from use of Digital technologies.

A survey was conducted by me, amongst the Student community, to gauge their expectations from their teachers, during the **COVID – 19 PANDEMIC**. The findings are summarised below:

1. **Be flexible, responsive and positive**: Do not assign things that are to be completed within specific time because as students have different problems in this lockdown period due to this their availability and effectiveness to complete the assign task varies. Also teachers may provide appropriate guidance to students before giving some task and help them in completion of task.

2. **Proper schedule and timings**: Online classes and meetings should be according to appropriate schedule which should be given 1 week before conducting online classes/meetings. Clash of timings between different teachers classes/meetings should also be avoided.

3. **Be slow paced and more informative**: While teaching through online platforms, teachers need to be slow paced in delivering important concepts that will form a base of further study. This will allow the students to gradually soak in the information; as also allow them to better understand and comprehend the concepts. This will also kindle their interest in the subject and enhance their desire to learn more

4. **Network Problem**: Despite the fact that technology is being continuously upgraded in India; internet speeds, connectivity and network issues remain. While metropolitan areas and bigger towns are comparatively better off, these issues prevail widely in other areas in India; albeit to varying extents. As such, teachers would have to take into cognizance; such issues; and factor them while building strategies and plans; for holding online classes / meetings as well as conducting online tests / viva / assignments.

5. **Technical Assistance**: Some students may not be so technology savvy; or possess smart phones or advanced electronic gadgets. Due to this they will not able to perform their required academic activities properly. Teachers need to understand this problem; develop strategies to overcome them as also provide technical assistance to students; wherever necessary.

6. **Good communication**: Communication with all the students via SMS, Whatsapp Groups, Telegram etc. (at least 2 platforms should be used to communicate required information) with proper message including warm and friendly introduction. (As most of the students have different gadgets and different applications working on it, because of this they can access given information easily and will remain informed)

7. **Counseling and mental support**: As lot of students have different problem in this lockdown period, So teachers can organize a counseling sessions with all those students personally or with groups and can provide them suggestions, review the situation and can provide mental support to them.

8. **Conduct classes alternatively**: As students also have lot of pressure of undertaking coaching classes and other competitive exams and courses, as such schools/colleges should consider conducting their classes alternatively; with some extra time limit to take some pressure off the students.

B. **TEACHERS PERSPECTIVE**: Concerns of the teaching community arising from use of Digital technologies.

A survey was conducted by me, amongst the Teaching community, to "gauge their expectation from teachers" about Digital education.

1. How to ensure all students participate in the online digital sessions ?
2. How to ensure there are live interactive sessions wherein the "students can clear their doubts" and concerns?
3. How to hold tests and examinations where the students are not able to adopt unfair means?
4. How to develop effective and student friendly systems for Digital Education ?

Conclusion:

In the covid 19 quagmire its very clear that online mode of education is not going to disappear totally. Its true there is no substitute for face to face teaching learning but we have learned it that online modes are going to stay. Teachers needs a coordination with students and administration for improving online modes of education. A better emotional and mental understanding is must among teacher and learner and role of teacher is very important.

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