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RESEARCH ARTICLE

CLASSROOMS IN 2030: PROSPECTS AND CONCERNS IN ODISHA STATE

***Dr. Mohanty, B. K.**

Department of Botany & Biotechnology, Khallikote Cluster University, (Formerly Khallikote Autonomous College), Berhampur-760 001, Odisha State, India

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ABSTRACT

The higher education in Odisha has taken massive structural and systemic changes that have started showing encouraging results. About 20 years ago, the class rooms were only a four walled structure for teaching, but now it has undergone a sea change with modernization and infrastructure developments. The visibility of Smart class rooms, use of ICT tools in general colleges also. The number is gradually increasing with flow of state govt., UGC and RUSA fund. The challenges for planners, administrators and teachers are huge to provide online educational platform, educational apps, smart class rooms with wi-fi campus to a considerable percentage of college and universities in 2030.

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INTRODUCTION

The existing challenges for Indian education – access, equity and quality is to be considered keeping in mind about the huge student Population with India being one of the youngest nation in the world by 2030. The vision of Higher Education for 2030 must include the reforms with a road map to reach the targeted group of students. The problem of India to develop a education model focusing the future young generation to be best for the world .The country and the state has the problem of population, poverty, pollution and illiteracy across the length and breadth. Further, there is a major gap in education between urban and countryside populations due to socio-economic conditions. One of the major innovative approach we need to follow is the intensive use of technology mostly in form of ICT tools and improvising class room without which the massive expansion of education cannot became a reality. Coming to our state, Odisha with population of 4.19crores with 70% rural population and literacy rate ranging from 44-70% is committed to the Universalisation of Elementary Education in the State

with the aim of fulfilling the constitutional obligation with the assistance of Central Government. OPEPA (Orissa Primary Education Programmae Authority) has taken several measures through SSA to improve gross enrollment ratio, attracting young to class room through several rewards/incentives. Same is the scenario at high school level. Expect for private run schools and central schools, the classroom scene is very poor and the use of ICT tools in teaching-learning is rare. Mostly it is Chalk and talk by teachers.

However, there is growing use of technology with smart class room in a private institutions but it is beyond the reach of rural population due huge cost. There is a growing demand of International Schools in urban centers due to its facilities but again it is only for rich and elite population. At +2 level, the private run residential colleges/institutions having tie up with Nationally repute Engg .and medical coaching centers are doing well in comparison to other colleges. They have developed state of art class rooms and there is extensive use of ICT tools in teaching. Here, teacher is more or less a facilitator of information transfer, rather than one to one interaction with students having various level of competence.

***Corresponding author: Dr. Mohanty, B. K.,**

Department of Botany & Biotechnology, Khallikote Cluster University, (Formerly Khallikote Autonomous College), Berhampur-760 001, Odisha State, India.

Challenges

In order to realize the goals we envision for 2030, a transformative and innovative approach would be required across all the levers of higher education: from curricula and teaching methodology, to the use of technology to partnerships, governance and funding. Making rapid progress over the next two decades would require a committed and concerted effort from all stakeholders involved i.e. academia, industry, and Government. Despite of these strides of progress, India's higher education institutions are not yet the best in the world – India has fewer than 25 universities in the top 200. Yet, India's post-secondary education system is increasingly recognized as being the best for the world. The promise of excellence and equity has made the Indian higher education system worthy of emulating, certainly in the developing world that faces the same challenges as India did in the decades prior to its higher education reforms, but less obviously in pockets of the developed world which is under tremendous pressure to provide higher education in cost-effective ways.

However, India has emerged as a regional hub of education and attracts global learners from all over the world. Students, faculty and employers now flock to India to learn, teach and recruit as India dons the mantle of a higher education leader and emerges the role model for delivering high-quality education to vast numbers at low cost. Students now have a choice to a wider variety of unique and quality programs at both graduate and undergraduate levels. It clarifies student choices and effectively caters to a heterogeneous student population with varying needs and demands, while also providing them the option for inter-institution mobility through system wide credit transfer. In this way, while planned expansion has helped create capacity for ever-increasing numbers, the differentiated system has been instrumental in directing these numbers to the right stream and the appropriate kind of institution in order to effectively meet the needs of Indian society. Lastly, planned expansion has also helped to solve for the problem of infrastructure and resources. Riding the wave of urban planning, India earmarked tracts of land in many tier-II cities to create 'education cities' which have today emerged to be thriving inner-city university campuses tightly integrated with their host cities.

Opportunities

The Indian higher education system has undergone massive expansion to become the largest in the world enrolling over 70 million students. Such expansion would have been unimaginable without the extensive use of ICT tools. To illustrate, if India were to create this additional capacity through increase in brick and mortar institutions alone, it would have had to build six universities and 270 colleges each and every month in the last 20 years – a feat that would have been impossible to achieve with India's limited resources. Online platforms and ICT tools have helped take higher education to millions of deserving students in far-flung areas who would otherwise have no access to university education. Online education has become the first port of call for many students who were earlier left out of the higher education system, or had to settle for lower quality alternatives. This process made it

possible for the country to provide a quality education to the masses despite poor faculty-student ratios. Students today increasingly learn from leading faculty at elite institutions beyond the four walls of their classrooms as top-tier institutions have donned the mantle of being content generators. Professors collaborate across universities to collectively create and distribute for-credit curriculum for an online semester. Technology has not only been instrumental in addressing the demand-supply gap for quality education, but has fundamentally changed the nature of several educational processes.

Gone are the days when students had to gather in a large hall only to hear a lecture. Today, classroom lectures and pre-recorded and uploaded to be accessed by students at their comfort. Class time is instead used for creating more in-depth learning experiences through group activities, problem solving and interactive learning. Online analytics provide faculty with data on how and at what pace each student is learning, enabling them to provide personalized support to aid student learning outcomes. It allowed students to learn at their own pace – for instance, slow learners can go over certain content and exercises multiple times with special tools to aid their learning. Finally, the institutions imparting part of the program is taught online and part in person has become particularly popular among adult and working professionals looking to gain additional credentials. It provides them with the flexibility to access course material as their schedule permits. According to a recent government report 2/3rd of India's college and universities are below standards. Further the MHRD had assessed that we will need 800 new universities and 40000 new colleges to meet the aim of 30% GER by 2030. Such a massive expansion would need to have significant private sector initiatives. Besides to ensure quality foreign universities of repute would need to be invited to either set independent operations or collaborate with existing Indian universities.

Higher Education in the state of ODISHA

The state has become the hub of higher education and numerous nationally acclaimed institutions have campuses in the state. There has been a spurt of institutions of higher learning in state of late. The department of Higher Education looks after the education at University, PG, UG and HS level in state. It also provides vocational education to prepare youth for self employment. The also promotes professional courses in govt. as well as in private sector. Now, the govt. has planned in Odisha higher education vision2020 with formulation of a four tier knowledge centers in the state with state capital, Bhubaneswar being the education hub having all most all elite institutions of national repute. This also includes the first tier, BBSR-CTC-PURI metropolitan regions having world class university, technical and medical institutions. The second tier having 5 other metropolitan cities with central university, technical university and medical colleges. The 3rd tier in urban area having state university, autonomous colleges and medical college and the fourth tier of small towns with autonomous colleges.

This plan has targeted to get 30%GER in 2020 which will be equivalent to national level GER. Govt. has dramatically

increased the investments to create and improve existing infrastructure. Emphasis is now laid to have more student friendly smart class rooms with all facilities and more rewards to poor and as well as meritorious students through generous scholarships. Now, with the plans of Digital India and Skill development programme launched by centre, state has take this opportunity to pass the benefit to the students. This is because, the most valuable assets for students in 2030 will be personal skill like their ability to interact with others, take sound decisions and effective time management. Another concern which is an all India phenomenon is the grade inflation at HS and all levels.

It is good to imagine that the intellect level of our young generation is rising due rise in their grade but at the same time our international standard in Science, technology and innovation is declining. In one way, we feel proud when our wards get a seat in IIT/NIT/IIS/IIM, yet globally these institutions of elite are minor players. The educationist and teachers must take a note of it for quality teaching and evaluating process of students must be structured around creative students rather than tick the right box and take your marks and run. Now. We have to think whether our students are more skilled and awarding good grades to them is a way to conceal our poor education system. At the end, these days are the days of 'apps', hence with the increasing mobile density with young population using affordable smart phones, we need to develop more and more educational applications in mobile platform to keep our young mass at least engaged in educational activities in skill oriented sector.

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