REMOTE LEARNING AND WORKING IS THE FUTURE OF WORK: SKILL SET REQUIRED FOR BRIDGING GAP BETWEEN INDUSTRY & ACADEMIA DURING AND POST COVID-19 PANDEMIC IN INDIAN PERSPECTIVE

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Abstract:

The aim behind this study is to make students future-ready during a post-COVID world. The research is based on secondary data collected from the online regarding education, teaching, learning difficulties, steps to be adopted in education to bring it forward more effectively. The increased use of digital technology that has resulted from the replacement of face-to-face encounters with digital interactions, or digitalization, is leading to transformations in education and affects the Trilemma. Universities face new challenges, and opportunities are emerging. Drawing on lessons learnt from COVID-19; higher educational institutions will got to intensify and build digital and other skills to make students employable. While there would make certain technical requirements of an organization when it involves bringing new members of the team on board, certain skill sets are likely to be in demand across industries during a post-COVID world.

Key words: *education, digitization, global pandemic, cloud security, data literacy.*

Introduction:

The coronavirus pandemic began to accentuate in India around 13th March 2020. Since then, businesses and professionals are forced to adopt digitization in its real sense. With the virus bringing life to a standstill, it isn't just the employers feeling the pressure to adapt to new innovative technologies for running 'business as usual', but also the workers who are being continuously pushed to seek out and up skill. As per a report by the Harvard Business Review, the impact of COVID-19 has delivered to light a rising digital divide between the company and different parts of their workforce. Because the pandemic accelerates and telework surfaces as a replacement norm, the term 'adapt or die' feels more relevant today. The worldwide pandemic has accelerated the digital future and what we called the 'Future of Work' is now this. Remote learning and dealing have forced individuals to interact virtually and learn new technologies to embrace digitization. According to Gartner, 'Digital Dexterity' will still be a priority within the present environment. What it means is simple – the facility to make the only out of technology for better business outcomes. While the earth is grappling to affect the negative impact of COVID-19, the pandemic has presented itself with opportunities to beat India's biggest challenges – access and employment. Advancements in digital

technology have led to the creation of latest job roles and new business opportunities, thus giving rise to employment within the country.

Objectives:

1) To understand teaching, learning difficulties, & the challenges educational institutions are facing

2) To suggest steps to be adopted in education to bring it forward more effectively during and post COVID-19 world.

3) To make students future ready during a post COVID-19 world.

There are three differing types of activities performed in educational institutions that taken together form the components of a Trilemma in higher education. These include traditional academic activities (research and teaching) and people that aim to transfer knowledge beyond academia (industry-oriented activities).

Let us have a glance on set of skills required in students and other requisites in teaching-learning eco-system.

1) Learning Soft Skills: If there's anything that this outbreak has taught us, it's the necessity to enhance on our soft skills. The uncertainty imposed by the worldwide pandemic has left many organizational heads trying to find employees who are agile, high on communication skills and collaborative. As remote learning takes precedence, organizations are watching hiring employees that possess these soft skills to run 'business as usual' in tough situations just like the world is facing immediately. Educators should specialize in developing these skills amongst students through various project-based assignments where they will inculcate skills like teamwork and crisis management and improve on other relevant soft skills.

2) Digital Literacy: the most important challenge of adapting to remote working has been digital literacy. The shortage of digital skills remains the highest binding constraint for young employees with quite 84% of them citing it as a topmost constraint during a survey conducted by the planet Economic Forum. Education Institutes got to provide relevant courses which will help bridge this gap. Technologies like AI and Robotics have always been in demand as they create businesses more resistant to pandemics just like the Covid-19. Teaching students skills like coding and programming won't only help students in being relevant and future-ready but also digitally competent.

3) Data Literacy: With most of the work shifting to online platforms with the outbreak of COVID-19, organizations are having to take care of huge amounts of knowledge on the cloud. Therefore, data and cloud security became important skills for organizations across sectors. Data Literacy, analytics and data science became crucial to an organization's growth in these challenging times and thus require skilled professionals. So got to make changes in syllabus accordingly for each stream.

4) Creativity and Innovation: Digitization brings with itself a chance to make and innovate products and solutions for target customers during a new environment. During a post-COVID world, organizations will look to rent employees which will give unconventional solutions to drive growth in business during unprecedented times. Workshops on creativity and innovation which will stir the young minds can help build this extremely crucial skill. Sure, it won't build overnight. These skills will need to be developed on the work. But with the proper amount of coaching and exposure to creativity boosting sessions from higher

educational institutions, it'll instigate students on the way to think creatively and become innovators within the future.

5) Curriculum should be fine-tuned with Industry's Direction: The interdependent correlation of the industry and therefore the education sector is an undeniable abstract within the country's rising state of economy. Sustainability of the rising graph on the event scale involves strong on-going collaborations between Industrial Conglomerates and Institutes of upper Learning. There's the same level of dependability as Industry provides job opportunities to graduates and Institutes provide workforce to the industry. Acting as a bridge between the two quadrants is that the curriculum within the Indian education context that gives institutions the niftiness to act and serve to the industry's demands. It's been observed that institutions convince offer better workforce if their curriculum is ok tuned within the industry's direction.

6) Need to supply real time workplace exposure: When studying in colleges, students aren't aware of workplace expectations. Hence awareness is to be created by exposing them with real-time workplace. Internships works alright to bridge the gap between academia and industry, a number of the schools in India has already made it mandatory as a neighborhood of curriculum. By performing on internship, graduates not only learn in terms of their job expectations but also study other behavioral aspects. These behavioral aspects include written and speech with colleagues and seniors, taking complete ownership of the given work, delivering quality output and learning on real-time tasks. Also by attending company level common activities like team meeting, offsite-workshops and company all-hands meeting interns can build big picture of how a corporation functions. Alongside internship students are often made aware of the company world by having different engagement programs with the industry. A number of them include having guest lectures by experts, 1:1 mentoring, having experts as project guide, having industry experts as extended faculty etc.

7) Capacity Development: Capacity development is another important way during which industry-academia gap are often reduced. It should be seen as an extended term and continuous improvement mechanism (popularly referred to as Kaizen principles) using which capacity are often developed across the entire ecosystem.

Here are a number of the actions which will be taken at different ends. Contribution for capacity development:

A] Individual: Every individual must take a step to enhance their capabilities which include students, faculty and organizations. The training attitude is yet to be cultivated by different mechanisms using which individual can still enhance their knowledge and skills. This may also help a private to become a life-long learner and adapt to changes as they'll face in future. With new technologies disrupting traditional ways (ex: Artificial Intelligence), having a learner mindset makes an enormous difference.

B] Organizational: Organizational capacity building are often wiped out sort of mentioning better practices of teaching, standardizing evaluation mechanisms and better way of collaboration. There are many umbrella organizations are created like National Skill Development Corporation (NSDC) which already has STEP program which may be leveraged across different government and privately owned universities alongside

their colleges. Such common adaptation mechanism will build overall organizational capability.

C] Social level: of these capacity building should be done at a social level. This is often interactive public administration where a society as an entire should work on. They ought to take the feedback within the positive manner and begin performing on it. Social level capacity development is to develop the society as whole.

8) Consistent knowledge transfer: All the above mentioned points need to be weaved into a consistent knowledge transfer ecosystem. This ecosystem should connect new curriculum development, faculty development programs, developing better teaching practices, building industry partners for internship, having industry expert ecosystem with strong backup from management of engineering colleges and universities. This consistent ecosystem should provide new thoughts and latest happenings in a motivating and thought provoking manner.

9) Leadership: Lastly, a really important skill within the new normal would be 'Leadership'. As employees will still work remotely, the young workforce also will be expected to be proactive, self-motivated and high on leadership skills to be equipped to manage remote working teams. Employees with such skills would be extremely appealing to hiring managers during a post-COVID-19 world. Therefore, giving access to such courses online which may help students build this skill would be a breakthrough in making students future-ready.

Analysis:

The effective implementation of the smart learning system requires the following:

1) Training teachers building their capacities and preparing them to supply distance learning and education;

2) Creating, adapting and harmonizing curricula for distance learning;

Education is undergoing unprecedented difficulties and challenges during the pandemic. However, the present crisis are often became a chance by building a more resilient education system. To realize this transformation, we should always exert effort to:

1) capitalize on IT;

2) provide vocational education for teachers and enhance their capacities; review assessment methods;

3) engage during a comprehensive digital transformation;

4) build effective partnerships; and

5) Review old educational philosophies, also because the goals and outputs of the tutorial system, to be in line with recent developments also like market requirements.

COVID-19 impact on education within the short term:

Positive impact:

1) Increased attention and appreciation to distance learning systems,

2) Growing appreciation and understanding of teachers' role within the community, and provision of technical development opportunities associated with distance learning for teachers,

3) Establishing regional and international partnerships within the field of technology.

Negative impact:

1) Existing gap in distance learning implementation on the national and international levels,

2) Variation of students' academic attainment supported the power of educational institutions and institutions to supply distance learning,

3) Negative impact on students, teachers and parents' quality of life during lockdown.

COVID-19 impact on education within the long term:

Positive impact:

1) Increasing the scope and reach of education to all or any segments of society

2) Redefining the role of faculties and developing assessment policies;

3) Developing innovative models for education and preparing students for brand spanking new jobs;

4) Increasing research and entrepreneurship;

5) Establishing partnerships between the general public and personal sectors.

Negative impact:

1) Possible inequality associated with educational services provided to students;

2) Decreasing academic attainment in areas that lack technological means to supply distance learning;

3) Difficulties in measuring learning outcomes thanks to undeveloped student performance assessment opportunities of the tutorial sector after the pandemic

4) By addressing the challenges and building on the success we've achieved, we will maximize the training opportunities, ensure quality, fair and inclusive education, and enhance learning opportunities for during four main themes as follows:

A) Possibilities for developing the tutorial system

B) Improving learning outcomes

C) Measuring the standard of education system outputs

D) To seize aforementioned opportunities, recommendations were involved to: Enable infrastructure, make it available for everybody and make sure that it can accommodate all updates occurring in educational platforms and resources; and ensure mutual collaboration and support among organizations, institutions and states to empower underprivileged areas;

E) Establish regulatory policies and frameworks to handle emergencies and ensure quality and equity in education altogether circumstances;

F) Improve curricula to accommodate different teaching and learning methods, especially the sensible ones;

G) Habilitate, train and enable teachers and education authorities to develop their teaching and learning methods for lifelong learning, optimise distance learning and adapt to the changing reality of the tutorial process.

Major Findings:

1) The increased use of digital technology that has resulted from the replacement of face-to-face encounters

with digital interactions, or digitalization, is resulting in transformations in education and affects the trilemma; universities face new challenges, and opportunities are emerging. Drawing on lessons learnt from COVID-19.

2) Higher educational institutions will need to intensify and build digital and other skills to form students employable. While there would be sure technical requirements of a corporation when it involves bringing new members of the team on board, certain skill sets are likely to be in demand across industries during a post-COVID world.

Conclusion:

So, where can we stand now and what has got to be done? India stands first in producing more number of graduates but quality and use ability requires significant improvement. The industry-academia gap got to be bridged. Across the planet motivated and skilled brain is that the most precious asset, which is out there at large scale in India. Thanks to its demographic advantage India is predicted to be the youngest country by 2020 with 64% of its population with average age of 29. This huge mass got to be converted into a positive force by making the spirited youth employable. This involves the necessity to bridge the industry-academia gap to form students future-ready during a post-COVID world. Higher educational institutions will need to intensify and build digital and other skills to form students employable. While there would be sure technical requirements of a corporation when it involves bringing new members of the team on board, certain skill sets are likely to be in demand across industries during a post-COVID world. Bridging industry-academia gap plays a really important role during this whole scenario where students, universities, organizations and government got to energize and work together to form it happen!

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