

Refining and Redefining Basic Education in the Perspective of Blended Learning: A Constructivist Outlook

Arnab Kumar Dutta^a and Chandan Adhikary^{b*}

^aAssistant Professor, Dishari College of Education, Burdwan, West Bengal, India

^bAssistant Professor, Institute of Education (P.G.) for Women, Chandernagore, Hooghly, West Bengal, India

*Corresponding author: Chandan Adhikary

Abstract

Contemporary education aims at preparing socially useful productive entity. In order to achieve this aim, emphasis should be laid upon hands on activity and productive work. In this investigation we are to explore a constructive teaching-learning strategy for enhancing professional and vocational efficiency among the young generation learner. This strategy is a thoughtful integration of the classical and modern educational findings which entails a structured form of educational process to fulfil that aim in Indian socio-cultural landscape. Indian society needs vocational up gradation with healthy competition, cooperation and moral value of the pupils. So, it is not the question about method of the educational process but also mode of interaction to fulfil that aim through the proper guidance. This new teaching-learning strategy follows the principles of 'learning by doing' with necessary theoretical content knowledge amalgamated with digital media as well as traditional classroom interactions. More clearly this paper focuses on redefining of basic education concept of Gandhi in the light of Blended learning.

Key word: Vocational efficiency, Learning by doing, Digital media, Basic education, blended learning

Introduction

The recent educational system is unable to provide appropriate direction to our youth pupils. It does not provide them opportunities for their all-round harmonious and holistic development or to make them self-reliant and self-sufficient. To day the youths acquire different degrees, but still they do not become reliant and are not able to shape their future in a socially desirable pathway. In this situation, the education or degrees acquired by the pupils are meaningless or useless. The present education system produces only literate unemployed youth force without confidence, which could not face emerging challenges. It is a fact that present system of education has been defective for the last many decades. After independence many committees & commissions have been formed, but how much improvement has been made in the reformation of education is a matter of question. The youths who belong to agriculture back ground received degree or not, they wish to work or serve in the cities on fewer salaries, which could not meet their day today needs. Due to these youths from rural villages drained towards cities. This situation affects on the economy of villages or rural area. If we are not awoken at the right time and take initiatives to bring changes in our defective educational system according to the views of Mahatma Gandhi, the situation would become so serious that we would not be able to manage it. In this respect it is the time to introduce a new education system which will be helpful for new generations to build up their career and bright prospect.

Objectives

The objectives of the present investigation are:

- I. Refining the basic education to overcome the contemporary situation.
- II. Redefining the basic education on the light of blended learning process.
- III. Introducing a new teaching learning process which is helpful for youth pupils.
- IV. Constructing a vocational education system in collaboration with Indian socio cultural perspective as well as internationalism.
- V. Formulating a new teaching learning process to make the pupils self sufficient and self supporting.

Methodology

This paper is based on desktop analysis of secondary qualitative information.

Discussion

Basic Education

Gandhiji designed a scheme for basic education in which vocational training or work experience was the utmost important. It is due to the fact that it stimulates the human mind for creative thinking or dignity of manual labour. He thought that such creative thinking should be taken up from primary to higher level education. His view on basic education is greatly influenced by his philosophy of satya (truth), ahimsa (non-violence), firm belief in God, dignity of labour. According to him, "By education I mean an all-round drawing out of the best in child and man-body, mind and spirit". "Literacy is neither the end of education nor even the beginning. It is only one of the means by which man and woman can be educated. Literacy in itself is no education. I would therefore begin the child's education by teaching it a useful handicraft and enabling it to produce from the moment it begins its training. Thus every school can be made self-supporting".

Gandhiji emphasized certain ideals, practical work and the potentiality of students in education. It is education through which we can find out the potential of the students and teach them certain ideals. It will help them to be a good citizen. By employing practical activities students will be able to think practically and they will be attentive and active. This will help them to mould their character. Gandhiji focused on education that provides earning while learning. S/he can remove unemployment keeping in mind the poverty and unemployment of India. Gandhiji focused and suggested industrial training and development of manual skills and handicraft as subject of education which will give satisfaction to the educand in his earning and self reliance but also it will be proved as a support to his/her family and nation at large. In this way he introduced the concept of 3 H's (Figure 1) and 3 R's.

These are:

Hand-psychomotor domain/skills

Heart-spiritual domain/skills

Head-Cognitive domain/skills

3R's : Read, write and arithmetic

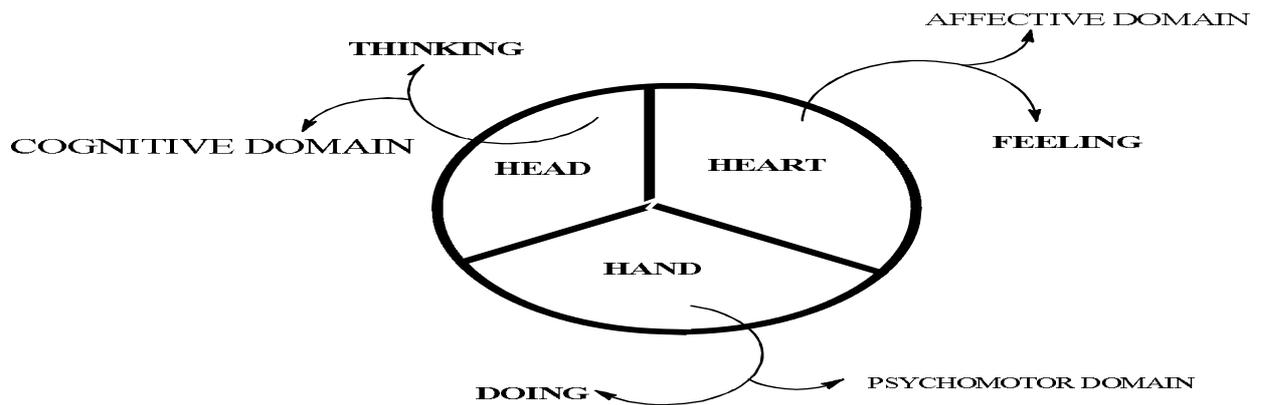


Figure 1. Schematic representation of 3H

Gandhi advocated both individual and social aim of education. He laid emphasis on individual perfection and a new social order based on “Truth” & “Non-violence”. Education trains an individual as per his or her desires and abilities and makes a socially useful ideal citizen. An individual learns everything from surrounding, culture, society and so on. Accordingly society will develop through individuals’ growth. In brief, Gandhi recommended the following methods of teaching:-

1. Mother tongue as the medium of Instruction.
2. Productive craft as the base and core of all education.
3. Teaching through creative and productive activities.
4. Learning by doing and learning while earning.
5. Learning by living, service and participation, self experience.
6. Correlation as the most valid technique of teaching.
7. Lecture, Questioning and Discussion methods.

Blended learning

Blended learning is an educational system that combines online digital media with traditional classroom methods (inter and intra-person). More clearly, students might attend a class taught by a teacher in a traditional classroom setting, while also independently completing online components of the course outside of the classroom. In this case, in-class time may be either replaced or supplemented by online learning experiences, and students would learn about the same topics online as they do in class-i.e., the online and in-person learning experiences would parallel and complement one another. Blended learning is a type of paradigm shift of learning strategy which breaks down the traditional walls of teaching, ones that don’t work for all students and now with access to present day technologies and resources we can tailor the learning experience for each student. Blended learning also offers flexible time frames that can be personalized to each person, offering them the ability to learn at their own pace. A block diagram describing blended type learning is collated in Figure 2.

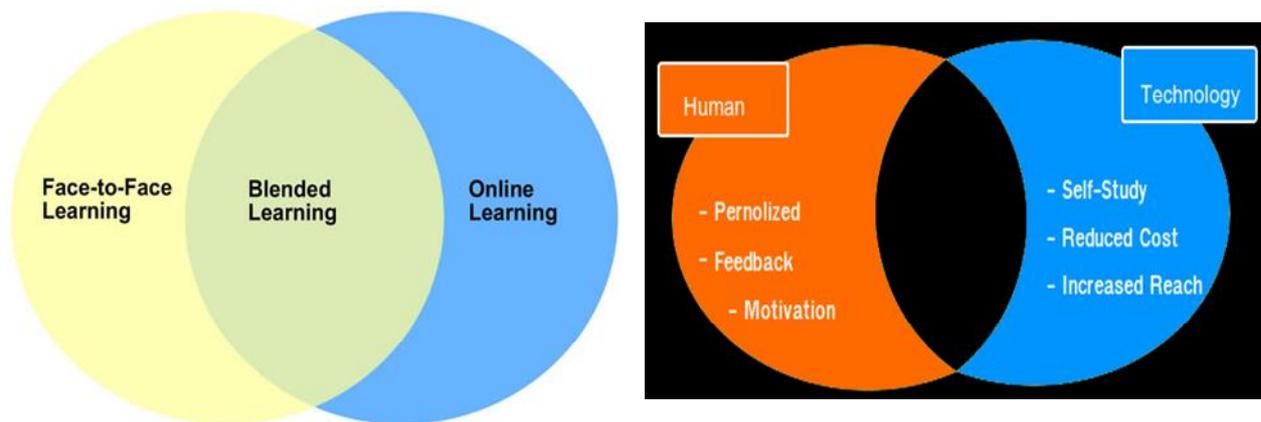


Figure 2. Block Diagram of Blended Learning

Advantages of Blended Learning

The advantages of blended learning strategy are:

- Blended-learning allows more affective interactions between the learners and their instructors through the use of emails, discussion boards and chat room.
- Keep students focused for longer.
- Provides student autonomy or student centric teaching learning process. In other words, blended learning enables the student to access the materials from anywhere at any time.
- Access to global resources and materials that meet the students' level of knowledge and interest.
- Instil a disposition of self-advocacy.
- Students have the ability to track their progress.
- Promote student ownership.
- Allow instant diagnostic information and student feedback.
- Students can also learn through a variety of activities that apply to many different learning styles.
- Enables students to learn at their own pace.
- Blended-learning could improve the quality of teaching and learning as it supports the face-to-face teaching approaches.

New teaching learning process

Now-a-days unemployment is a rapid growth disease in the Indian society. Only education can help in this respect because education is the process of adjustment. To overcome this type of situation a new type of teaching learning process is essential for the upliftment of the society. So, Researcher wanted to introduce a new type of teaching learning process which is useful for the contemporary society and students' needs. It is a type of teaching learning process which is aimed at increasing the productive or vocational efficiency of young students in the form of Indian cultural ethics and global competition. To take part in this healthy competition this type of vocational education must be enriched by the science and technology which are followed in the different parts of the world. In a single word, this type of teaching learning process purely focuses on the job opportunity of the pupils.

Objectives of the new teaching learning process

Objectives of this teaching learning process are:

- i. Vocational training
- ii. Self supporting
- iii. Character building
- iv. Cultural education
- v. Self realization
- vi. Combination of individualism and socialism

Medium of the new teaching learning process

Indian language as well as English language (global language). Indian language or mother tongue for introduces of the process and make student familiar with the process. English language must be use for the betterment of the process as well as engagement with the global scale.

Mode of the new teaching learning process

Traditional method of teaching learning process collaborates with e-learning. That means face to face learning (physical presence of both teacher and student) as well as online learning. This type of learning process can be explained by a single framework of teaching learning process which is known as Blended learning.

Advantages of the new teaching learning process

- Increases student interest.
- Prepares students for the future.
- Improves ability to personalize learning
- Potential for individual progress
- Improves student engagement and motivation
- Ability to improve working climate
- Potential to extend the reach of effective teachers
- Self-pacing for slow or quick learners reduces stress, increases satisfaction and information retention.
- This type of learning offers flexibility in terms of availability – Anytime, anywhere.

Conclusion

This type of teaching learning process focuses on the contemporary needs of the Indian societies and youths by the defining the main theme of the Basic education in a new way. Because in this era of globalization, industrialization, vocationalization and cost minimization of the education system, a constructive approach must be maintain to follow the steps of worldwide development and contribution. Employment according to a student's abilities must maintain his/her all round development and he/she also take participate in the development of the society.

Basic education according to Gandhiji gave a detail about the format of vocational education. He advocated societal upliftment through the engagement of the pupils in a local industry and its development which enrich student's ability and overcome the problems of unemployment. If we consider this thought of Gandhiji about education it must be eradicated the problem of unemployment in the contemporary society but if we want to take part in the global competition then only the Indian language and Indian traditional industrial practices will not give the right direction.

So the researcher discusses the basic education in a newer way through the light of blended learning. This type of learning is appropriate for the contemporary Indian society and youth forces.

References

- (1) Govt. of India, Ministry of Education, New Delhi, Report of the Indian Education Commission (1964-66).
- (2) National Curriculum frame Work: NCERT, New Delhi (2005).
- (3) National Curriculum frame Work for Teacher Education: NCERT, New Delhi (2009).
- (4) Miller, G. A. The magical number seven, plus or minus two: some limits on our capacity for processing information. *Psychological Review* 1956, 63, 81-97.
- (5) Afflerbach, P.; Pearson, P. D.; Paris, S. H. Clarifying differences between reading skills and reading strategies. *The Reading Teacher* 2008, 61(5), 364-373.
- (6) Guilford, J. P. Creativity. *American Psychologist*, 1950, 5,444–454.
- (7) Cropley, Arthur. In Praise of Convergent Thinking. *Creativity Research Journal* 2006, 18 (3), 391-404.
- (8) Strategies of Divergent Thinking. University of Washington. Retrieved 2009.
- (9) Vygotsky, L.S. *Mind in Society: The Development of Higher Psychological Processes*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press (1978).
- (10) Barak, M. Transition from traditional to ICT-enhanced learning environments in undergraduate courses. *Computers and Education*. 2007, 48, 30-33.